

**EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN
KAZAKHSTAN, 1991-2016**

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY*

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Education and Women Empowerment in Kazakhstan, 1991-2016**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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**EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN,
1991-2016**

Dedicated

to

My Beloved Parents

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Grammatical errors at certain point, though taken care of, are inevitable and are my responsibility.

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Abbreviations

ADB-	Asian Development Bank
ASSR-	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
CEDAW-	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPSU-	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSO-	Civil Society Organization
DFID-	Department for International Development
EAAA-	External Assessment of Academic Achievement
EBRD-	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECHR-	European Convention on Human Rights
ECTS-	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEEA-	Escondido Elementary Educators Association
GDP-	Gross Domestic Product
GEI-	Gender Equity Index
IAC-	International Advisory Council
ICT-	Information and Communication Technologies
IGPN-	International Green Purchasing Network
ILO-	International Labour Organization
KUBT (Russian) -	Commission for the Improvement of Women's Labour and Life
MDG-	Millennium Development Goal
MESRK-	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan
MFA-	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NCWA- National Commission for Women's Affair

NES- National Education System

NGO- Non Government Organization

NSA- National Security Agency

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PISA- Programme for International Student Assessment

SIDA- Swedish International Development Agency

SME- Small and Medium Enterprises

SPED- State Programme for Education and Development

TIMSS- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

TVE- Technical and Vocational Education

UGS- Ungraded School

UIS- University Information System

UN- United Nations

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA- United Nations Fund for Population Activities

UNHDR- United Nations Human Development Report

UNIDO- United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNT- Unified National Test

USAID- United States Agency for International Development

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VET- Vocational Education and Training

WPR- World Population Review

YCL- Young Communist League

CHAPTER- 1

THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER

Introduction

Both sex and gender have different connotations and definitions in academia and day to day space. Sex generally implies biological traits and dispositions, which is inherent in nature whereas gender refers to acquired characteristics to adopt and inhabit in the society because of socialization. Therefore sex is unalterable and immutable, but in regard of gender, it varies. Sex is commonly referred to one's physical and its associated biological functions. However, gender is altogether different from sex. It is the behaviors, customs, socially prescribed roles, status and the varied activities and attributes that a society bestows to the male and female.

Gender generally termed as the socially constructed peculiarity of women and men. This includes various rules, norms, roles and relationships among the groups of women and men. It can be changed and varies from society to society depending upon the circumstances. In a society where most of the people are born as either male or female, individual gain proper knowledge of norms and behaviors from their society. They learned from society how they should talk with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities and any other work places. The people will face the problems, stress or strain, discrimination or social exclusion, if individual will be unable to establish them in the society. All of which could have an adverse affect on his or her health both physically and mentally. It is a very sensitive issue with different identities, if it does not necessarily fit into the binary of male or female categories.

An individual's sound mental, physical and wellbeing is influenced by the gender norms, roles and relationship. It also has a bearing on people's understanding and access to health services and on the health outcomes they experience throughout their life. In a society gender generally means to social or cultural distinctiveness with being male or female. Gender identity is the capability of an individual to identify as being either masculine or feminine (Diamond, 2002). The biological determination of sex of a person, may does not always necessarily relates with his or her gender.

Gender may or may not depend upon biological traits due to its fluidity. In a specific way it visualizes, how the society determine and manage sex categories. The cultural aspect played an important role with regards to men and women's roles in the society including individuals understanding in a broad way, as being a woman, man, transgender, intersex, gender queer and other gender positions. The concept of gender involves social norms, belief, faith, attitudes and activities that society consider more appropriate for one sex over another. It is also determined by what an individual feels and does in his or her day to day life.

From the sociological perspective, gender examines how society influences the understanding of individuals and their perception regarding the differences between masculinity and femininity. In a simple term it tries to identify, what the society deems proper behavior for a man and woman. In the subsequent chapters we will try to examine how this, aspect in turn, influences the identity and social practices. A special focus also has given to the power relationships that follow from the established gender order in a particular society, and how it changes over the period of time.

“Every democratic society which aspires to social justice and human right regards equality as the central point (UN, 2002)”. Hence, the concept of gender equality which is defined in many ways by many scholars has been considered as the subject of great debate and discussions in contemporary world scenario. The ‘United Nations Human Development Report’ (1995) defines gender equality in terms of capabilities and opportunities. Capabilities include health, education, and nutrition, whereas opportunities requires in the field of economic and decision making. On the other hand, in the year 2002, World Bank defines gender equality in terms of “equality under the law, equality of opportunity and equality of voice, the ability to influence and contribute to the development process” (World Bank, 2002).

Types of Gender

In general term, gender basically means what somebody is, and what they, classify them whether be male, female or others. We can find many instances where people do not have any idea regarding what gender actually are. Apart from male and female there are different types of

gender, but in the society male and female are recognized as two genders, and other genders are neglected by most of the people. According to Jessica Mahmoud, gender can be categorized in the following ways (Mahmoud, 2015).

- ***Agender***

Agender is a person who does not bears any kind of gender. The physical body of an agender does not necessarily relate with their lack of gender identity. Most of the times, they do not concerned with their physical sex, but may be look likes an ‘androgynous’. An androgynous person is an individual who physically appears as neither man nor woman.

- ***Cisgender***

Cisgender refers to the feeling of an individual regarding their biological sex, whatever he or she was assigned during birth. However, in most of the cases people do not clarify if they identify as Cisgender. It is generally the perception of individuals regarding his/her gender identity. This kind of gender is most common among society, but should not be assumed.

- ***Genderfluid***

Genderfluid individuals do not perceive themselves as male or female. They may identify as male or female depending on the day and circumstances. In such a situation the individuals regarded as being fluid with their gender expression, which is different from one’s gender identity. Gender expression includes the physical characteristics of a person, their behaviors, and presentation that are either linked to masculinity or femininity.

- ***Genderqueer***

Genderqueer peoples have a variety of identity. Such types of person may identify as male or female, between or beyond genders, or a combination of genders. These types of individuals very often challenge gender stereotypes along with the gender binary system of male and female. They are not constant with regards to their gender expression.

- ***Intersex***

Generally intersex is a medical term which is used for a person born with chromosomes, genitalia, or secondary sexual features that are inconsistent with the typical definition of a male or female body. These kinds of peoples are not always aware that they are having being in such condition, but some people choose to share this types of identity.

Gender non-conforming

Individuals having gender non-conforming features, either by nature or by choice does not accord with the gender based expectations of society. Such type of peoples consists of greater gender stereotypes with thinking like pink for girls or guys should have muscles. The behavior of such person does not conform to these, and they may identify as the opposite sex like transgender peoples.

- ***Transgender***

Transgender is a term used for those individuals whose gender identity does not conform to their assigned physical sex. It can be found, among others, such as transmen, transwomen, genderqueer people, crossdressers, and drag queens or kings. Generally, it refers to the behavior of an individual which does not match with the stereotypical expectations of gender. Transgender people in a straight way may be identifying as gay, bisexual, or some other sexual orientation. In short term it can be called as Trans. However, it does not necessarily means that everyone may identify as transgender, but rather it should be assumed from their gender behaviors.

Empowerment in General

It is a very uphill task to define the concept 'empowerment'. Different individuals may give different meanings based on their diverse social conditions. In a situation where the basic living conditions are not fulfilled, for those person empowerment may be termed as right to food, clothing, shelter, health care etc. After these situations were solved, then education and employment may become major aspects of empowerment. But in real sense empowerment is concerned with individual's access to decision-making and power of autonomy. In a given situation, if an individual is able to decide about his or her own life according to their living condition, then that particular individual can be termed as empowered. None the less the concept of empowerment is very much subjective and depends upon the circumstances.

According to Batliwala, “the concept of empowerment was widely recognized as a strategy to development in the mid-1980s. Within the purview of empowerment, all the excluded groups including women were considered as the target groups. Since early 1990s empowerment of women has gathered a lot of momentum (Batliwala, 1994)”.

Linda Mayoux defines empowerment as “the multidimensional and interlinked process through which people work towards a society where all people are able to make and realize free and informed life choices. Free and informed life choices are only ultimately possible within an environment of equal opportunities, resources and power. It requires both bottom-up empowerment of those currently having least power, and also top-down changes in the attitudes, behaviour and position of the currently powerful (Mayoux, 1995)”.

According to Naila Kabeer, the concept of empowerment has close relations with the process of disempowerment (Kabeer, 1999). It is 'a process of change' which an individual achieved through his or her capacity by making choices that were previously denied. Kabeer also believes that some individuals may not be called as empowered even though they exercise power over making choices. It is due to possession of this ability by some peoples in advance and they were not disempowered ever (ibid.).

Empowerment basically does not make any distinction between 'condition' and 'position' of women (Young, 1988). At the same time, we can found that the 'strategic' needs of government programmes have overtaken the 'practical' needs of women (Molyneux, 1985). The status of women should not represent their position with regard to exercise of gender roles but it could negotiate their rights. This put a great challenge before women to change in their attitude from role playing to challenging the power structure. Hence, before focusing on wider issues of women like reduction of infant and maternal mortality, equal wages for work, etc, their basics needs such as ‘balance diet, access to education and health care, prevention of child marriage, abolition of dowry, access to contraception’ are first to be addressed. In simple terms, changes in women’s position can be made through literacy, reduction of infant mortality and availability of safe contraception. All these measures could help them in improving their status and accelerate the process of women empowerment.

As Agarwal says, empowerment “could be defined as a process that enhances the ability of disadvantaged (powerless) persons or groups to challenge and change (in their favour) existing power relationships that place them in subordinate economic, social and political

positions(Agarwal, 2008)”. This makes Naila Kabeer (1999), to conceptualize empowerment, on the basis of analysis of power. This analysis of power includes different notions of individual’s choices. Kabeer said, there exists a close relationship between poverty and disempowerment because lack of ability to fulfil the basic needs of life forced individuals to ignore their strategic choices. The choices of a person may differ from each other. All these choices of life can be analyzed from three interrelated aspects, such as resources, agency and achievements.

According to Kabeer (1999), resources not only include material assets but it also refers to the human and social assets. All these resources are achieved through various networking like family, market, state and community. Individual makes various choices with accessing the resources. This also helps to the process of exchange of resources and institutional distribution. All this aspects can be better understood through societal agency, and it is considered to be another dimension of power. Generally agency refers to the ability to aspire and achieve any objective. It can be equated with decision-making process. This also includes the power of motivation which may be either tangible or intangible. All these aspects comes from 'power from within' and one's own self or groups to act. Agency may be used in positive and negative perspectives. From a positive point of view, it may be 'power to' and in a negative sense, it may refer to 'power over'. Here, 'power to' refers to one's control over choices, where as 'power over' is just the curtailment of power of an individual by others.

According to Ranjani “women empowerment can be analyzed in relation to three dimensions i.e. 'power to', 'power with', and 'power within'. The 'power to' dimension of empowerment refers to the calibre of a woman to take decision and control her own life. This includes 'power to survive, control over their labour and access to family labour, access to and control over resources, freedom to move and interact, access to leadership positions, control over reproduction and control over body'. The 'power with' indicates the power of women as a group among the class to fight for their rights against institutional setups i.e. market, state, family and community. Lastly, the 'power within' can be equated with development of gender awareness. The development of gender awareness can again be understood at two levels. At the individual level, it is manifested through challenging the gender norms in one's own life. On the other hand, understanding of others about women's freedom and autonomy is achieved at the abstract level (Ranjani, 2002)”.

Sara Longwe (1991) believes that economic, social and political empowerment can only be achieved through accessibility to resources. She has the view that this will help women to be equal with men. In the process of development, this will minimize the gap between the sexes. This can be only possible through initially making women's access to social, economic, and political sphere and gradually exercising them to control over it.

Acharya and Ghimire is of the opinion that the process of empowerment can be examined in terms of economic, social and political aspects. According to them "while in one hand 'economic aspects would include increasing women's access to, and command over tangible and intangible resources, such as wealth, property, employment, knowledge and information, the social aspect would include changing the existing discriminatory ideology and culture, which determine the environment for women's existence'. The political aspect refers to women's control over power relations which is determined through her access to resources. This possession of status within the prevailing social structure is of vital significance. All the three dimensions can be considered to be interdependent though they may occur one after the other (Ghimire, 2005)".

Deshmukh, Ranadive and Murthy (2005: 47) are of the view that empowerment can neither be given to anyone, nor can be said to be achieved by any institution. It is basically a process of transformation from inequality to achievement of equality. We can empower people through participation of the marginalized section, in attaining their rights over housing, nutrition, health care, clothing, educational facilities, employment opportunities etc. "Empowerment is a process whereby constraints that impeded equal participation are reduced so that the inequality starts moving towards becoming equality". Constraints can be understood by analysing the concept of 'spaces'. "By 'space' is meant that which allows a person the place, freedom, and margin to do what he or she intends to do". Again spaces may include various categories, such as socio-cultural, physical, economic, and political, and it may be both tangible and intangible in nature. Every individual in a society has access to different types of spaces, which determine their relative position to others. There are restrictions over some portions of the spaces depending up on the action of individuals. Generally this affects the 'power over, power to, power with and power within' aspects of decision-making. From women's perspective, it can be said that their

position can be improved by providing them spaces. Control over body and freedom of mobility help them to enrich their physical space.

Women's access to physical space not only improves their status of in the domestic life but also outside the household. Through the possession of tangible and intangible property, the physical space helps in acquiring economic space. The tangible property includes the elements which have a physical existence, such as house, land, jewellery etc. On the other hand intangible property belongs to the inner talents acquired by individuals through education, vocation etc. Through the socio-cultural space individuals learn the autonomy and freedom in the economic space. The position of women in the family and kinship ties determines their socio-cultural space. However, this space may vary on the basis of family structure. The socio-cultural space also influenced by aspects like class, ethnicity, age, marital status, religion and region etc.

Lastly, the political space of a woman can be both public and private. The public political space is interlinked with individual's control over state machinery. This includes influence of a person in terms of possession of power to govern and implement policies. It is one of the toughest tasks and is determined through leadership and statesmanship qualities. On the other side, the private political space refers to the space within the household and it is different from the socio-cultural space. It connotes the dynamics of work at the household level rather than counting their position in the society as a whole. "Hence, when one is concerned with power dynamics within the domestic domain, it is political space that answers questions on how those dynamics work, while physical, economic and socio-cultural spaces answer questions on why members are so placed (Deshmukh, 2005)". According to the gender roles credited to women, political space occupies a better position in their hierarchical structure.

Defining Women Empowerment

Although women were able to achieve control over public political space, they still act as puppets in the hands of their male counterparts. Women's empowerment can't be achieved by just taking steps towards improving their status in physical, economic, socio-cultural and political space but it also lies with their proper implementation. At the same time, mere access to

economic resources of women could not lead to empowerment, without bringing about any change in the socio-cultural spheres. Change can only be brought about by expanding their mental spaces. The mental space refers to the capacity of an individual to feel and act accordingly. It is a crucial aspect in the process of empowerment. While a woman takes decisions about her own life without being influenced by others, she can be considered as empowered. All the spaces including physical, economic, socio-cultural, political and mental, work together to achieve empowerment, though there exists no linear relationship among them. However, all of the aspects posed challenges to the unequal gender relationships and improve the status of women at the household as well as societal level (Murthy, 2005).

From the above points, it is clear that resources and agency plays an important role for achievement of any kind goals. When an individual is incapable to access the aforesaid resources due to some constraints, then that person can be considered as disempowered. Nevertheless, the social conditions may vary across the regions, class, race and gender etc. To understand the social reality, it is necessary to study the relationships between these variables. As for instance, not in every case a poor woman is to be considered as dis-empowered in the society, but also in some cases it can be found that women belonging to the higher class with distinct status may also occupying a subordinated position. During menstruation and child birth, the women belonging to upper class may also be considered to be impure and polluted. Hence, there is need to study women's situation based on different context and time in order to understand the reality.

In modern society, Marx and Engels is the two major exponent of women empowerment. They were very much concerned with the conditions of proletariat women under the bourgeois rule. According to them, under capitalism the subjugation of women remains unchanged and they were exploited in various ways. The situation was more worsen in regards to the situation of proletariat women. They were disintegrated from families and take recourse of prostitution. Under capitalist rule all relations transforms in to commodity relations and women becomes the instruments of enjoyment, production, and reproductions. According to the founder of Marxism, the degree women were emancipated over the years is the results of general emancipation and still a long way to go to achieve their goals in true sense of term (Patnaik, 1989).

Engels in his book, 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' relates oppressed women with class antagonism. According to him class antagonism starts from the family between women and men; and in subsequent periods it spread across the society. Within the family women occupies a subordinated position and behaved like a slave. As Engels stated, family becomes the centre of capitalist class relations. In bourgeois families women and children were dependent on men due to its wage earning capabilities. The foundation of the family lays on economic ties rather than love and affections (Patnaik, 1989).

During 19th century, taking inspiration from Marx and Engels, many socialist parties demanded women's suffrage with full legal equality. This will make women conscious about their positions in the society. Women's suffrage has a relation with the social equality, which could provide them independence from family owing. However, Marx and Engels believe that political and juridical equality is not sufficient for complete equality of women. According to them the real emancipation of women could possible through their participation in the process of production. This would provide equal status for women in a socialist society (Patnaik, 1989).

August Bebel, on his work, "Woman Question" reveals that the real emancipation of women could possible only through the abolition of private property and liberation of both the sexes from monogamous family. He further suggested that the genuine equality between both the sexes could achieve not only through equality in political and juridical sphere, but also requires their participation in public ownership of means of production. Through the use of modern technology, there should be equal participation with equality of leisure. In simple terms, the inferior status of women can only be eliminated through radical changes in the nature of family by abolishing private property (Patnaik, 1989).

One of the major exponents of socialism Lenin very clearly discusses the status of women in exploitative class societies. According to him capitalism forced a large numbers of people in to the garbage of poverty and destruction. Within the families women not only worked as 'domestic slaves' but also work extremely in low wages. In all societies whether it may be slave owning, feudal or capitalist, wage slavery forced women to the business of prostitution. Over the years, the form of exploitation has got changes, but exploitation remains the same. Lenin also draws attention to one of the important aspects of female labor in capitalism under Russian condition is

petty-production and domestic industry. In this sphere there is predominance of women labor. With low payments, they work for longer hours in this sector. Due to this form of production women are always remains the puppet of men. To solve this problem Lenin suggested revolution and its success depends on the extent of women's participation. After revolution there will be dictatorship of proletariat. Under the dictatorship of proletariat women no longer remains an object of struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. There will be equality and both became equal partners to build socialism (Patnaik, 1989).

Regarding gender inequalities, Kabeer has stated that it can be analysed through the relations of power and individual's ability to exercise choice. According to her the unequal treatment of the sex is due to 'either as an absence of choice on the part of women as the subordinate group or as active discrimination by men as the dominant group (Kabeer, 1999)'. In a society differences may occur not only due to discrimination made by men but also in some cases women themselves creates discrimination. Such a situation arises, when women constrain themselves according to their social norms and subsequently satisfied with the subordinated position. Women generally confined themselves to household activities, and act as silent spectator about the violence exercised by their spouses. They are forced to bear children until the birth of a male child even though it affects their own health. Such kinds of behaviour of women; reveals not only their dwindling status in society but also act as a hindrance in the path of well-being of other women. It can be explained in terms of immoral patriarchy system in South Asian regions, where women are discriminated by another woman.

Being impacted with the aspect of patriarchy, mothers often practice foeticide and infanticide in order to prevent the survival of a girl child. By doing such acts they did not allowed their status to fall in the eyes of the society. In the society, mothers-in-law not only exploit their daughters-in-law, in terms of dowry but also forced her to borne a male child. By analysing this, it is clear that women are being exploited in hands of another woman, to occupy a higher position in the society by bearing a male child.

Bhasin (2000) is of the opinion that there are some women, who want to curtail the independence of others, in order to maintain a relative higher position in the society. Hence, for better

understanding, it is necessary to understand the complexities of social relationships. The real reason behind the preference of a male child, discrimination of a girl child, mistreatment of daughters-in-law by women themselves can be explained in terms of power relation within the family. In subsequent periods it expands to the society.

The entire above examples stand in contradiction to the concept of empowerment and freedom of exercising choices. Hence, a person has to understand the concept of empowerment not only through the power relations of making choices but also through the kind of choices that are made. Empowerment does not analyze the differences of making choices but it determines the capability of an individual to make choice. To understand empowerment through a reliable parameter, it is important to scrutinize the inequalities in making choices. Besides class, these differences also need to analyze across gender. This would give a clear picture regarding the reasons behind inability of an individual to make choices. Therefore, the process of empowerment not only required people's awareness regarding prevailing discrimination but also required to make them competent enough to revolt against it. In simple terms, "empowerment can be achieved both through consensus and also conflict (Kabeer, 1999)". When women start to raise their voice against domestic violence by challenging the social system, than only a change could be realised. Women's mere access to resources in no way would change their status in the society.

According to Kabeer, "though access to resources is thought to be crucial in relation to women empowerment, but without understanding the right to exercise power over it is meaningless (Kabeer, 1999)". In simple term, besides understanding the relationship between empowerment and resources, the choice of an individual also plays an important role. This refers to the participation of women in the decision making process. However, there exists a difference between potential and actualized choice. Mere possession of rights does not empower a woman unless she has the right to exercise her choice. Nevertheless, this has to cope with challenging the prevailing inequities in the society. Initially there is need to accelerate women's participation over decision-making at the level of family and community. In later periods, with the growth of awareness among the women, would lead to mark their participation in the social, economic and political sphere. As a results of which, women would overcome from various societal

discrimination and subordination (Karl, 1995). Empowerment should provide opportunities to channelize the choices of women. On the other hand, they have also need to be involved in the process of implementation of developmental projects designed for them.

In order to understand any approach which measure levels of empowerment, all the three aspects, such as resources; agency and achievement has to be study in detail. The reason is due to the fact that all the three are interrelated. Resource means the potential of the agency to choose rather than actually exercise choice. Agency also has to be understood through the strategic choices to challenge the inequities existing in the society. While agencies utilize the resources to demean the existing inequalities, then achievement of women's empowerment can be made in the true sense of term (Kabeer, 1999). Within the power relations of the society, all these three dimensions can improve the status of women.

It is important “to make a distinction between achievement differentials which signal differences in choice and those which draw attention to inequalities in the ability to make choice (Kabeer, 1999)”. As Kabeer stated women were solely responsible for child care, any change in those activities may be perceived as a measure of improvement in their status, but one can't use the term empowerment. “In other words, what mattered for achievements in relation to children's wellbeing was women's agency as mothers rather than as wives (Kabeer, 1999)”. Women who have the achievement over taking decisions in regard to effective child care measures are empowered within the family. Although she exercised their rights regarding their own children, she may not possess the same authority over her husband or any other member in the family. Women were not only controlled by male members but elder women members like mother-in-law also exercise control over them.

'Resource' has to be understood from the point of view of 'human agency' and 'valued achievements' than mere 'accesses' to it. The major shortcomings in the implementation of 'de facto entitlement' are to ignore the issues raised from the 'de jure entitlement'. Taking all this into account would help in analysing women's 'choices' in either or not exercising their rights (Kabeer, 1999).

The 'entitlement approach' is important from the perspective of negotiating the power relations. This can be achieved either through legal provisions or through modification of existing customs. Legal rights of women do not conform to exercise the same. Hence, besides the legal issues, the social issues have to be addressed. Another important aspect is to understand the perceptions of men and women's rights over resources. This would help in implementing the control of women on resources with enhancing their bargaining power. Women's access to allotment through legacy and control can be a source of resource.

Sarah Longwe analysing the fifth level of empowerment, equality of control, visualised that "women can be said to have rights in the real sense when they would be able to take decisions over it alike men. In other words, when the bargaining power of women in relation to their rights will be at par with men, then they can said to be empowered (Rao, 2005)". Regarding the unequal gender relations, Hayward (1998) is of the opinion that the power relations in the society can only be feeling through the inequalities prevailing in the society. The deprived sections of the peoples were restricted through power relation which creates differences in the society. The dominant sections were dividing themselves from marginalized. The process of disempowerment of others people again helps in privileging some. Hence, there is need to analyze the constraints faced and privilege accumulated by individuals in the society, for better understanding of empowerment and disempowerment.

According to Batliwala, "the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power, may be termed empowerment. Empowerment is thus both a process and the result of that process (Batliwala, 1994)". Batliwala correlates empowerment with power. It challenges the prevailing power relations of the society which make women subordinated. This has to be seen not only from gender perspective but also needs to study on the basis of class, region, and religion. This power can be understood in terms of individual's control over 'material assets', 'intellectual resources' and 'ideology'. The material asset includes access to land holdings, forest lands, fiscal and monetary resources, credits etc. Control over intellectual resources includes the right to information and knowledge. Lastly, ideology refers to the mindset of an individual, institutionalized on the basis of his or her own perception and not on the basis of societal norms. Rowland- Serdar and Schwartz-Shea also

equated empowerment with power relationships (Rowland, 1991). According to them, “powerlessness is the continuing subordination of women to men in public and private spheres, supported by cultural messages of devaluation internalized, in varying degrees, by women (Schwartz, 1991)”.

According to Kahlon (2004) and S. Batliwala (1994) “empowerment is therefore clearly concerned with power and particularly with the power relations and the distribution of power between individuals and groups (Kahlon, 2004)”. Bhasin and Dhar (1998) has stated that “empowerment is an ongoing and dynamic process, which enhances women's and any other marginalized and alienated groups' abilities to change the structures and ideologies that keep them subordinate. It is a process of making present power structures more inclusive, including all women and men, senior citizens, indigenous people and people with disabilities (Bhasin, 1998)”.

The process of empowerment has posed a grave challenge to the existing power relations and helps in reducing the inequalities. Discrimination and the domination of few in the society can be controlled by providing opportunities to the discriminated group which were previously denied. Both empowerment and inclusion can be seen as supplementary to each other. The former is working 'from below' through the capacity-building of the marginalized sections. Whereas the latter can be seen 'from above' by providing various measures for the marginalised group (DFID, World Bank, 2005). In this context, Mohanty (1995) argues that "the old concept of 'growth with social justice' has been replaced with the new goal of 'development with empowerment (Mohanty, 1995)". As he stated, empowerment is nothing but giving power to the unprivileged section of the society. Nevertheless, besides making provision for economic empowerment, attention also needs to pay towards the unorganized workers like poor peasants, tribal people, and women. A country would be termed as a perfect democracy in true sense, if its policy formulation and implementation, takes proper care to the needs of the people.

The Draft Declaration of the Third Preparatory Committee (New York, 1995) has stated, "empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and the well-being of our societies (Jumani, 2006)." This facilitates the participation of the people in both, economic and social sphere to

realize their potentials from the opportunities available to them. The participatory approach assures people's involvement in various socio-economic sectors. Due to this decentralization process, the masses are involved in the process of their own development. The masses should be involved in the process of implementation on various developmental programmes relating to their health, education, employment etc.

Through the process of decentralization power, the concept of empowerment can only be made successful. This would further leads to an egalitarian society where all differences are minimized (Mohanty, 1995). All this could be achieved by challenging the existing power structure of capitalism, patriarchy and through spreading the agenda of autonomy and freedom among the masses.

Women Empowerment in Kazakhstan

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, women are more actively involved themselves in political, social and economic sphere. During the recent years, the women of Kazakhstan have revealed higher social activity, and it raised the gender status of the country at international level. Kazakhstan has been ranked 33rd in the Gender Equity Index on April, 2012 (GEI) by Social Watch (<http://kazworld.info/?p=22160>). It studies the gap between women and men in educational, economic and political spheres. The government tries to protect the rights of mothers and children, as well as improvement of demographic situation through effective policies and programs. In the year 2011, a Special Action Plan adopted at the Congress of Women of Kazakhstan to improve their representation in political officials. It helped women to increase their strength up to 30 percent in government agencies.

According to Abdikalikova (Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan) "the participation of women in the economic sphere has increased significantly. Another program developed to promote women's entrepreneurship for 2009-2015 expands annually the forms and methods of support for women entrepreneurs. The number of companies led by women is increasing every year (<http://kazworld.info/?p=22160>).” The “Damu” Entrepreneurship Support Fund has granted 743 loans to women for an overall amount of 3,676 million tenge, in the year 2012, which supported

for creating 194 new jobs in Kazakhstan (ibid.). The share of women among the recipients of small loans reached up to 40 percent in 2012, due to the “Employment Programme-2020” (MFA, 2012). According to Minister of Labor and Social Security “the share of women among the deputies of the Majilis of Parliament reached 24 percent in 2012. The level of representation of women in Maslikhats is also quite high. In Kostanay region the representation was 31 percent, in Aktobe 28 percent and in Pavlodar 23 percent (ibid).”

Gulshara Abdikalikova, in her report (2012) discussed regarding the network of Women’s Leadership Schools, and eleven regional clubs for women-politicians. Along with, several discussions and a conference on “Leadership of women in socio-economic modernization of Kazakhstan” have been held in the year 2012. She also said “These organizations make a significant contribution to strengthening the institution of the family, protecting the rights of mothers and children and strengthening the political influence of women in society (<http://kazworld.info/?p=22160>).”

To raise the status of women, much attention has paid to improve their literacy rates. A special thematic courses and seminars are held regularly in the educational institutions and government agencies. Along with appropriate disciplines, all areas of public policies were included in higher education curriculum. As Gulshara Abdikalikova said, special focus has been paid by the government for the protection of women’s rights. To achieve this objective, in the year 2012, the government has been developed a draft national report on the implementation pace of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly (ibid).

Economic empowerment refers to the capacity of individuals to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes. There should be some sort of respect to the dignity of the women, value of their contributions, and make it possible to arrange a fairer distribution of resources. The economic empowerment of women means women’s access to economic resources and opportunities in the sphere of jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. To strengthen the rights of women and enabling them to

have control over their lives, it is necessary to promote women's economic participation and empowerment. Than only an equitable and just societies can be established. Despite of this women still face discrimination and persistent gender inequalities in society. The percentage of female ownership in manufacturing sector occupies 28 percent in Kazakhstan. Around 1.22 million women have been engage in business sector. Women's share in small and medium size business are 44 percent in Kazakhstan (MFA, 2012).

To improve the status of women in business and protection of their basic rights, the first women NGO of Kazakhstan, the 'Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan' has organized regular summits. In November, 2015 the 4th 'Eurasian Women's summit' was held in Astana. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has launched women in business program during this summit. The EBRD has allocated huge amount to women led SME's and provided business advice to them. Under the program, the EBRD signed the first credit line in September, 2016, by providing 3.72 billion tenge to bank centre credit for on-leading to women led SMEs (MFA, 2012).

In 2015, a session of "Astana Economic Forum" was dedicated to international women's forum organized by the "Kazakh Association Business Women". In that session special attention was paid to the economic benefit of gender equality in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Kazakhstan has adopted a new law in December, 2009, "On the state guarantee of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women" (MFA, 2012), which guarantees equal access to both men and women in civil service. Out of 154 seats in Kazakh parliament women's representation are only 28 seats and they represent 25.2 percent of the lower house of parliament. At the end of March 2017, the representation of women in lower house of parliament was about 27 percent which is 10 percent higher than 2007 (MFA, 2012).

The Socio-political Scenario of Kazakhstan

Comparatively there has been stability in the political system in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan, for instance, without armed conflict and without inter-ethnic clashes. This has been influence continuously from the Soviet policies and regionalism, as well as actual strength of the central

government. Due to the process of systemic dissolution, the country has been facing various problems that all forms of socialist republic have confronted since 1991. Drastically changes to the economic and political landscape, especially the absence of a necessary infrastructure for a capitalist market driven economy have had negative effects in Kazakhstan including spiraling unemployment, poverty and crime rates.

The economic crisis took place during the period of transition to the capitalism which is accompanied by increased gender discrimination. The women of Kazakhstan statistically acquired 51.4 percent of Kazakhstani population, yet the numbers of women holding formal political position and benefiting from reasonable, successful businesses are comparably low. According to the available data on gender between 1990 and 1994, women lost 726, 000 jobs in Kazakhstan. In 1993, women were more than two third of the officially registered unemployed (Bauer, 1997). The number of women that are engaged in poorly paid, low qualification labor is twice as high as the number of men in 2004. Note that the majority of Kazakhstani women have higher education, yet women are under represented among managers and leaders and over represented among the unemployed and those living in poverty (Zellere, 2004).

Positively, on the basis of sex the Kazakhstan government prohibits the discrimination. The government has officially acknowledged some gender issue since late 1990s. For example in the year 1991, the government has approved the national action plan on improving the living condition of women in the republic of Kazakhstan. The plan included twelve priorities clustered around four principal directions of activities including the economic advancement of women (Government Resolution, 1999: 123). Though such type of steps are welcomed, it remains to be seen if the government is committed to improving the status of women and resolving the economic crisis they face. Women of Kazakhstan have had to work hard to protect and promote their interests.

“Kazakhstan has a unique history of its social and political situations. Since the Tsarist period to Soviet period and then its own independence, the society has been shaped by different forces of history. Kazakh culture is traditionally a patriarchal one, with much respect being given to men, especially elderly men. Symbols in the culture often represent power and warrior-like behavior,

often associated with men. This can be seen in many Kazakh households. Mostly, in villages and small towns women always prepare the food, pour the tea, and clean the dishes. Women prepare food or clean up after a meal whereas men have minimal household work. Men do work around the house, but it is usually with the horses, garden, or other outside work". There are many marriage and courtship customs that further assert the male as dominant in Kazakh society (Patnaik, 1989).

The social status of women in Central Asian society is shaped by myriad of invisible social and cultural customs, religion, tradition, family experiences, educational achievements and the history of local development. The historical domination of men over women has been changing in recent times. Women do have come very close to achieving equality with men with respect to their rights and opportunities. However, despite the development in social and economic spheres, women do not have representation in economic spheres properly.

The right to education is one of the most essential constitutional social rights, which creates conditions for the individual and common development. According to the Constitution of the republic of Kazakhstan of 1995, everyone has the right to education, regardless of sex, nationality, language, origin, place of residence, creed, social status, and has real opportunities to learn and obtain education (<http://kazakhstanhumanrights.com/social-economic-cultural/social-economic-rights/>).

Kazakh women have always been playing an important role in the economic field of the nation that grew out of a pastoral system. All spheres of human activities on the steppe has influenced by the Nomadic generated customs and traditions. Though they are good and reliable workmates in the difficult nomadic routines, their position in society, family and clan was higher than the women of sedentary clan in the neighbor of Central Asian Countries. They were never veiled and were generally less restricted than non-nomadic Turkic women.

The Kazakh nomadic society was organized and families were based on patriarchy. All the power of the family was concentrated on the head of the family. Kazakh society was allowed the polygamy but most people were practicing monogamy, only few people who are rich they were practicing polygamy.

Role of Education in Empowering Women

Education is perceived as one of the important inputs for the development of the women, through which they can be aware about their importance in the society rights, duties, and liberty etc. Education also plays an important role in shaping the emancipating roles for the oppressed gender. It opens up different opportunities and chances by making them capable enough to achieve those things. It gives access to those spaces which were prohibited for a category on the basis of gender. It tries to balance the gender equation on the basis of equal power distribution. In any society, women live in a subordinate position of men because of the patriarchal domination. Education helps breaking the chain of this patriarchal domination by providing the space for women to stand against all barriers of the society.

Education plays a crucial role in the process of empowerment of women as it provides the way to healthy social life and enhances self confidence, self esteem, positive image and rationality. According to Durkheim, education is an important agent to preserve the social norms and values. Over the years education brings changes in women. It develops women as a complete and matured human being. Knowledge and awareness help them in critical thinking regarding their own lives and family members. According to Ginzberg (1966) educated women have considerable choice regarding their marriage, starting the family and the size of the family. They have freedom of choice about working outside home.

The attitude of women towards family planning is influenced by education. Women, at least with some level of education favor the family planning practice. Education enhances her power to make family planning decisions. They like to have small family size. The positive association between education and the adoption of family planning has also a greater realization. There is also need to adopt a reasonable attitude towards family size. Education enhances women's health awareness, awareness about the location of health centers or hospitals and family planning services.

Women are the chief agents of socialization, particularly in the early formative years of a child,

which contribute significantly to the values and social norms of an efficient society (Gore, 1982). Education enhances a woman's sense of her own needs and perspectives, and empowers her to make decisions on various important socio-economic issues. Education could contribute to economic betterment, which improves the social status of the people. The literature reveals that increases in the spread of education especially middle school and beyond, among the women of the various castes is indication of later marriage or free movement of girls. There is a trend found among women going into certain 'respectable' white collar jobs. Those jobs were vested with considerable degree of authority and power, conferred prestige on her. The fertility rate can be decreased while the education of women will be increased. Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women and envisages the interventionist role on the part of the National Educational System in the empowerment of women. (Chiplunkar, 1987)

Education and Employment of women go a long way in achieving of equality in social and economic fields and improve their status. Education, occupation and income are certain structural factors in the status of women which have brought about a change in their cognitive structure. Job opportunities, economic hardship and social situation have encouraged women to take up employment outside family. Apart from economic necessities there are other reasons related to women's employment are desire for economic independence, utilization of her individual talent, supplementing the family income, utilizing time and energy and equality in status. The higher education of women increases their entry into occupational world also it increases their political awareness. Women have highly favorable attitude towards politics and considered education as an essential for economic status.

Education and knowledge gives women the power to reason and help to fight against social injustice. Families, especially the children, benefit from having a mother with formal schooling. The survival, health and school performance of children have been shown to be linked with mother's educational attainment. Women's education is very necessary in a challenging and changing society. As the level of education increases among women the degree of their participation in economic processes increases. Women's awareness and political participation increases through increasing level of education.

Rationale and Scope

Different scholars have given their views differently regarding the concepts of gender and women empowerment. Women are needs to empower broadly in three aspects, such as social, economic and political sphere. The socio-political empowerment of women is not possible without economic empowerment of women in Kazakhstan. The reason behind this is the prevailing traditional patriarchal nature of Kazakh society. Education could play a very important role in empowering women. Especially it is more relevant in developing country like Kazakhstan where today also women are treated like a means of enjoyment. They are confined to household activities only. The values produced by a house wife always remain unpaid and un-accounted. Thus education can plays the role of a bright sunshine which could escape women from the allegory of cave. Here the patriarchal Kazakh society and gender based discrimination can be termed as the cave where education could become a liberating factor for women.

The proposed study is relevant for both academic and general understanding. It tries to explore the relations among different forces like education, women, state and other social and political conditions of the society. It tries to understand how patriarchy shapes the space for a particular gender and later on how the education works as a liberating tool to give women equal chance and opportunities by putting down the barriers of patriarchy.

Although many works have been done in Kazakhstan, but the socio-political aspects of education and women have hardly been touched upon. So this will highlight the gender issues though a new perspective and new understanding. This will highly contribute to academics, cultural relations and general understanding. The availability of the resources may constraint the research work to some extent. But attempt will be made to widen our understanding of the dynamics of social relations, especially gender relations, in the broader framework of post- Soviet transformation.

Objectives

The main purpose of the present study is to examine the inter-linkages between education and women empowerment taking into consideration the dynamics of Kazakh society. It has been

shown in the following objectives of research:

- To explore different dimensions of gender.
- To understand the socio-political situation of Kazakhstan.
- To explore the gender dimension of development of Kazakhstan.
- To analyze the nature of patriarchy that works in the Kazakh society
- To critically examine the role of education in the development of women in particular and Kazakh society in general.
- To analyze gender parity in terms of education vis-a-vis Kazakhstan.
- To examine the role of state in the development of women in Kazakhstan.

Research Questions

- How does gender play an important role in the development of the society?
- How does education lead to the development of women by overcoming the patriarchal barriers?
- Despite the patriarchal nature of the society, why and how the women of Kazakhstan are in a better position than man in socio-educational spheres?
- Why the involvement of women in education is more than that of men in Kazakhstan?
- How do the women of Kazakhstan contribute in the development of society?
- What are the governmental policies and plans in uplifting the conditions of women of Kazakhstan?
- Why do women have underrepresentation in economic sphere, despite their higher literacy in Kazakhstan?

Hypotheses

These basic objectives were set in the light of certain hypotheses which will also be tested during the course of this study. These hypotheses are listed as below:

- Despite the patriarchal nature of the Kazakh society, education helped women to improve their conditions.
- The social and political empowerment of women is a misnomer without economic empowerment in Kazakhstan.

Research Methodology

The proposed study will apply both qualitative and quantitative methods. It will be both analytical and exploratory in nature as it focuses upon the conditions and positions of women in Kazakh society and the role of education therein. Mostly it relies on primary and secondary data like books, journals, articles, newspapers and internet websites. The proposed work will also apply comparative methods to have an understanding of both women and men in Kazakh society. Historical analysis of the socio-political conditions of the given society is most essential part of this study. It will try to unravel different nuances of women and their role in the development of Kazakhstan. Therefore, it will adopt both longitudinal and cross sectional methods too.

The dissertation contains five chapters including conclusion. The first chapter is on theoretical understanding of the basic concepts like empowerment, gender and the emancipating role of education. Taking consideration of various perspectives is an essential part of this chapter to unravel the nuances of the aforementioned conceptual categories. This chapter will also deal with the brief historical background of the present day Kazakhstan.

The second chapter discusses socio-economic and political conditions of women in Kazakhstan. It will take into account of various forces that shape the situations of Kazakhstan and gives direction to it both internally and externally. Having come out of the erstwhile regime of USSR, Kazakhstan underwent so many changes that influenced the citizens of this country. To keep pace with other states internationally, it also adopted various global processes like capitalism, liberalism and above all globalisation. All these forces had both kinds of influences. It shaped and impacted the state both positively and negatively too. On positive side, it got exposure to modern liberal ideas and ideologies and other effects of modernisation. However, along with the positive

dimensions it also encountered so many new problems that accentuated the state problems further more. This chapter will endeavor to capture all this above essence.

The third chapter deals with empowerment of women through education in Kazakhstan. Although Kazakhstan got independence many years back after the Soviet Union disintegration, the patriarchal elements of the society still influence and control the various socio-economic development of the society. Women are subordinated and marginalised in every sphere. However, education proves to be a liberating force for them as it opens up the gate of knowledge and reality. It gives women many opportunities to keep pace with men of the society. Through this, they better try to adopt the new situations and contribute to the society positively. To sum, this chapter will discuss all the role of education in the development of women in Kazakhstan.

The fourth chapter is based on state policies and prospects of women empowerment. It will analyse the situation of Kazakh society on gender perspective. It is needless to mention that Kazakhstan underwent so many changes after the dissolution of Soviet Union. And thereafter too, it formulated and adopted so many developmental strategies to uplift the social, political and economic conditions and security of the peoples living inside Kazakhstan. So the study will try to locate women in that situation. It will discuss various dimensions of the society in providing the space for women and the role of the state in it. The chapter will also discuss the areas in which women still lag in terms of representation.

Finally, the last chapter is based on concluding remarks. It includes the sum up view of all the previous chapters. Taking account of the hypotheses, it tries to analyse the facts. The hypotheses are tested as per the findings of the previous chapters. Simultaneously, in addition to this, this chapter is also attempt to provide some necessary solutions to women's problem on Kazakh society.

CHAPTER- 2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN KAZAKHSTAN

Introduction

In the year 1991 (December), the Republic of Kazakhstan got independence. It became the nine largest countries along with fourteen provinces and about 15 million populations. There are approximately 120 different kinds of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan, though most of the people are Kazakh or Russian. After independence, “Kazakh became the official state language, but Russian remains the dominant spoken language”. Russian language has remains the status of the “language of inter-ethnic communication” (Holm-Hansen, 1999). Kazakhstan consists of homogenous population despite of having landlocked country in geographically. Currently there are 63.1 percent of the population is ethnic Kazakh, while 23.7 percent people are Russian. The important aspect to the Kazakhstani demography is the gender ratios. There are approximately 100 females for every 92 males in the country (World Population Review, 2017). This is one of the crucial aspects of this study because the surplus of women will lead to more unmarried women. Again, this may leads to trafficking and married women having fewer choices for partners.

Two additional reasons why the Kazakhstan region is unique in terms of women’s rights is; its geographical location and history. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Central Asian region came into existence. Hence, all the five countries along with Kazakhstan are mostly young and trying to adopt with the changing international scenario. Besides this, Kazakhstan is in the middle of the Eurasian continent and from the security perspective; it makes them valuable from others. These two reasons create unique challenges to rights of women and this is the reason behind choosing this area as to be studied. No other region is so impressionable, strategic, or afflicted by human rights violations. The region Kazakhstan is analyzed because both politically and economically, it is in a developing position. Kazakhstan is the most stable region of the Central Asia and lots of things has to offer to the international community. It goes through

various stages of development which should be reflected in the status of women and women's rights.

In order to measure women's rights within a country, it is important to understand the social, economic and political conditions of women. It is characterised by the acceptance and prevalence of both domestic violence and sex trafficking are measured. These two dependent variables are indication of the women's rights because they reflect three truths about women in the region. First, they reveal that the governments promoted re-traditionalization of culture that appeared after independence in 1991. In order to unify the newly formed countries and separate those from their Soviet past the governments revive past cultures. These cultures, which advocate for the submission of women at any cost, are still prevalent today. Secondly, the prevalence of domestic violence and sex trafficking are reflection of the government's economic policies within each country. Women fall victim to both practices when their economic options are bleak and the government fails to sustain them when they cannot get jobs. Therefore, the response of government towards women in the economic sector directly influences the process of domestic violence and sex trafficking. Lastly, the two practices reflect how the state deals with the situation of religious fundamentalism. Due to its diverse geographical location, the country became the worst victim of radical Islam. It poses a grave challenge for the governments to ensure human rights and to keep the state secure from religious extremism. The present study tries to examine governments' reaction to the economic opportunity provide to women and their response to the prevailing domestic violence and sex trafficking.

Social Status of Women during Pre-Soviet Era

The societies of Central Asia were not designed uniformly, and the men have control over women extensively in each and every aspect, not only over religion, but also on tribal custom as well as kinship structured etc. According to the Islamic Law (Sharia), the Muslims are likely to be highly patriarchal and, in the public life also, they are strictly restricted on the basis of gender. But in the most of the region the sedentary people can accommodate comfortably with the *sharia*, whereas the nomadic people follow their own customary practice (*adat*). Women are being regulated strictly in every aspects of life, if any women who even dare to break the rules, custom, or traditions of male supremacy, she or her family were punished severely. In that

society women were like a puppet, they were first expected to be under the control of her father, after getting marriage she is expected to be under the control of her husband and then his relatives or sons.

The patriarchal traditions of the society and women freedom need for women's work in real life necessarily contradict and led some conflict. A women or wife usually designated 'weaker' or 'unequal' and almost universally considered as lower creature than her husband. She did not have any right to interfere in the life of the men, but in the household business she can enjoy noticeable status. For instance, a man could buy anything without the prior permission of his wife, and for the marriage of his son and daughter women's permission was not required (Tabyshalieva, 2003).

During this period, early marriage was a common practice between minors and minor girl. Women were bought by 'kalym' (bride price) like a slave. They had no intellectual culture, and denied from sending them to schools; even they were not allowed to write. Women were occupied a very low position during this periods. The Wife was being treated as "impure" and daughter as an "alien burden". A woman was denied to take meals with men at the same table and she had to wait for the order of her male counterparts. The pregnant women were regarded as impure and childlessness was greatest shame for them. If in some circumstances, the existing wife unable to provide children, than husband could take another wife. Women were always blamed for having no children. The birth of a son was always regarded as a matter of celebration, but in case of girl child the situation was just opposite. By analyzing this it can be said that women were not only the victim of various social practices, but also suffered from a sense of inferiority since their childhood (Patnaik, 1989).

From childhood a girl child help her mother as the house hold labor, instead of playing like the boys. Her wishes, likes, dislikes were of no importance to others in the society. She has to learn from the child hood that she is not equal with men. Since she has trained to work early ages, they matured early as compared to boy. While learning various domestic trades like carpet weaving, felt making, embroidering, and dress making etc. and after that girls were bought by the bidders. They compensated the parents for losing house hold workers (girl child). Due to early marriage

many women could not bear the pains of child birth and this leads to their death. The life expectancy of women was very low at that time. Women were not only treated as the slaves of one man (whom she married) but belong to whole family of her husband (Patnaik, 1989).

The practice of segregation was different from place to place and among the people between nomadic and settled groups. Rigorous segregation bears to occur in sedentary Muslim rather than among the nomadic peoples. This was directly linked with features of their economy and way of life. To the inner rooms of the house, or *ichkari* the settled women were segregated. Her way of life was wholly established by tradition if she was having innocent conversation with a man or she removed her veil (paranja) was considered as serious violation against law of the society. If someone (man) knocked to door of the house and no men are present in the home, she could respond by knocking the door indicates the unavailability of men. The lot of females in Pashtoon society is perhaps best epitomized by the proverb, 'for a woman, either the house or the grave.' (UNDP, 2005)

The traditional clothing of the women reflects their status in the society. The women from the age groups of 9-10 they stated to wear veil (paranja) in the sedentary Muslim society. They cover their whole body from toe to head. They cover their face by a black net and they also carried their child under the veil (paranja). In contrast to that due to economic conditions, the nomadic women never covered their face and they live less restricted life. On the issues of common interest the voice of the nomadic women can be heard often in the meetings. (Challyjeva, 2008). Virginty was appreciated in all Muslim society but any kind of disloyalty of women was punished severely, if they found out, lovers would be hanged. A woman was thrown from a minaret in Bukhara in the nineteenth century, because she was suspected to have extra marital affair. The rule of divorce wholly designed in favour of men, except those concerning property. The women can ask for divorce only on two grounds such as on cruelty or infertility of the husband. The second was very difficult to prove. The process of divorce in the Muslim society is very much easy for men they simply had to utter the word *talaq* (divorce) three times. According to the Muslim law *sharia* and *adat* after divorce the children must remain their father and his relatives. The *sharia* allowed only under-age daughters to remain with their divorced mother (ibid).

Women and Marriage System:

The women of the nomadic families get early married relatively in the Kazakhstan. In his ethnographic study of Kazakhs, Zeland (1885) states that the average age at marriage for Kazakh women was around 15. Furthermore, Usenova (1986) also confirms, that on the basis of the 1897 Census, that the average age was between 15 and 16, nevertheless, usually it was find that women were getting married as early as 12. Mostly, the poor family marry their daughter earlier, but in the contrary the wealthier family were preventing early marriage their daughter until she was 20 years or even more older. Most often the marriages were arranged by the parents of the daughter and often the arrangement took place much earlier than the actual marriage (sometimes even at birth of the future bride) (Aldashev, 2012).

Women were deprived of their right to divorce and had to accept the conditions made by the male. Just like a material property, men could buy women and discard them on his will. The life of the widow women had very miserable and pitiable. After the death of her husband, the widow can either remain alone or they were sold. There were instances where, they were married to elder or younger brother of her dead husband. Even after the death of her husband, most families treated women as their personal property. As a helpless worker she had bonded by family norms and not to be left free. If the husband bought or sell her like a material property, one can easily predict the situation of women after the death of her husband (Patnaik, 1989).

In the Kazakh society marriage involved payment of bride price (*kalym*), transfer to the bride's parents are made by the parents and the extend family of the groom. They rely on the rules which is set by the customary judges of Kazakhstan at their meetings for the value of the bride price and other regulations related to the marriage. For example, the meeting of the customary judges at Qaramola (North-Eastern Kazakhstan) regulated that for the wealthier families the value of bride prices was set at 47 heads of large livestock, and 17 heads for the poorer families. At the meeting of the customary judges at Almaty Similar figures are registered in 1904. These depicted comparably a large value, as compared to the total wealth of a nomadic family of Kazakhstan, in particular for the poorer strata of the Kazakh society (Guirkinger, 2016).

The family of the bride gave dowry at the time of marriage, while the rest will have to give at the birth of her first child or after one year of marriage. This is an unavoidable part of the society, where daughters were prohibited from patrimony. This kind of system could be found in many other parts of the world (Guirkinger, 2012).

Until Soviet times, the custom of levirate (compulsory marriage of widow to her deceased husband's brother) was traditionally followed mainly by the nomadic peoples. Giving bride price (kalym) means they consider it as buying a bride and they treat bride as slave not only for her husband but also the relatives in the clan. The relatives of the bride's husband inherited her after the death of her husband and treat her as object of exchange. The bitter condition of the life of nomadic people and the uninterrupted wars, together with the idea that the sexuality of the women should be controlled for the protection of the honour of the clan, which made hard for women to live alone. For the sake of their children most often widows are agreed to get leviratic marriages. One of the proverbs laid down the rule of levirate that, 'If an elder brother is dying, his wife is given to the younger brother; if he dies, his wife is transferred to an elder brother, just as the skin of a dead horse is the property of its master' (Zhangali, 2015). Except father-in-law, anyone can inherit the woman it may be uncle, brother of dead husband, or any other relative. The youngest brother could inherit the woman if there were several brothers.

There may be great difference in the ages between the couple in a marriage under custom of levirate. For instance 40 year old women can get married to 8 years old boy if he were the brother of her dead husband (Abramson, 1973). The family of her husband may be subjected to mockery, if the widow returned to her mother's home. If marriage was fixed between a man and a woman and her expected husband died having paid partly for his future bride, his younger brother inherited her. Sometimes the wishes of the woman that which she wants to marry eligible man can take in to consideration. The practice of 'sororate', was extensively which means the right of the widower to get married to the younger sister of his dead wife, was widely practiced among the nomadic people of the Kazakhstan.

There was a fear from the ancient time that a child would be unable to survive which led to customs and traditions that emphasized a woman's fertility. Most often due to the severely early

marriage for women which led to the premature infertility thus the child death rate increases and declines the birth rate. The extremely age gap between the couple, mainly in the polygamy marriages, also had significant influence on the body of the couple as well as their child.

Once married, women in Kazakh nomadic families, had relatively few children, and infant mortality was high. For instance, Zeland (1885) notes that in his sample, women gave birth to 4.21 children on average, but only 2.7 children survived into adulthood. At the age of 6-7 the children are started to help their children in household work, with a clear division on gender work, boys helped to the fathers on their work and girls helps their mothers on the work like washing clothes, cooking and taking care of their siblings (Aldashev, 2012).

Women played an important role in house hold works like taking care of cattle, milking the cows, spinning the wool, shearing the sheep, making the dairy produce and looking after other house hold activities like looking after children, cooking, cleaning the houses etc. They were also employed in cotton growing and gardening. Before October Revolution carpet making was one of main employment trade for women. Despite of these, women were unable to taste the fruits of their labor and they were totally dominated by their male counter parts (Patnaik, 1989).

Generally the women had to work hard because they had to support heavy workload, because they had to do both herding activities as well as management of the household activities. Historical sources say that despite of low social status of women in compare to women the economic role of women is extremely important. For instance, in a detailed analysis of customs in the nomadic Kazakh society, Makoveckii (1886) writes: “While severely limited, from the point of view of customary law, in terms of her proprietary and social rights, a Kazakh woman commands nevertheless an important role. The fact is that her life is restricted to the boundary of concerned nomadic village. It implies that all of the domestic economy and property lies in her hands. Whereas a Kazakh man spends most of the year on the horseback, in continuous moves, taking care of social affairs of the kin, district, and village, his wife remains the real head of the household and manages all of it, thus reducing her husband to the role of the nominal head” (Aldashev, 2012).

Stasevich (2011) have critically summarised the ethnographic analysis of the status of women in Kazakhstan of the pre-Soviet era. She mentioned that in spite of conflicting view on the formal legal and economic rights of women, most researchers agree that Kazakh nomadic women had a significantly larger freedom and a higher status than their counterparts in the sedentary agricultural areas of Central Asia.

Social Status of Women during Soviet Periods (1917-1990)

From the socio-economic, cultural and spiritual perspective, the 20th century has paramount importance in the life of Kazakh women. During these periods, women were witnessed three forms of social and political organization. For instance, women's status in Central Asia, Tsarist Russia's former colonial periphery, was determined to a great extent by the strict traditions and canons of Islam. It pushed women to live a secret and disenfranchised way of life.

Soviet historians outlined that only the October revolution had given women freedom and rights equal to those of men and had accordingly implemented a programme to secure these rights in real life. In fact, in Turkistan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, long before the Bolshevik Revolution, a progressive movement of the national intelligentsia known as Jadidism had raised the issue of drawing women into social and cultural life as part of its programme to revitalize and reorganize society. *Shura-i Islami*, a Jadidist organization, was the first to make the issue of women's participation in elections a part of its programme.

Mahmud Khoja Behbudi (1875–1919), 'Abdurrauf Fitrat (1884–1937), 'Abdallah Avlani (1878–1934), A. Chulpan and other well-known participants in this movement believed that the status of women determines the intellectual level of a particular society. There is need to change the perception of society towards women. Reforms could be initiated by changing the spiritual and cultural aspects of life. The educational level of mothers will determine the outlook of the younger generation in Kazakhstan. Society reflects the principles of family relationships; and mother's education regarded as foundations of the family (Behbudi, 1914). Nevertheless, the Jadids believes that religious traditional society would not be receptive to drastic changes, without any revolutionary measures.

To improve the status of women, a cultural movement was initiated by the Communist Party in 1920s. This gives importance to the materials basis of equality. Thousands of women crushed their 'paranjas' under feet and burnt them in public places. There were large numbers of women's club emerged including Red Corners, Red Boats, Red Yurtas etc. Being it was exclusively women's club, it could able to attract women for their liberation. In this way slowly the emancipation of women get momentum in Kazakhstan during Soviet periods (Patnaik, 1989). Cinema was another major instrument for emancipation of women in Kazakhstan. Women's movies visualizing them to through up their old status were made in local languages and to some extent it was very much successful to communicate the audience (Patnaik, 1989).

Such drastic changes were occurred in the Soviet period, when an experiment was initiated in political and social sphere in Central Asia. As a results of which, the Communist Party launched an open violent struggle against Islam. By realising the apathetic status of women in Central Asia, the communists geared up this struggle in to a mass movement. This resulted, in securing the legal rights of women and their entry into the sphere of production. Laws were promulgated for the abolition of *kalym* (bride-price) in the very first years of Soviet power in Kazakhstan and the Turkistan ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic). Provisions also made for setting the marriageable age (16 for girls, 18 for boys) and prohibiting both the marriage of minors and polygamy. In the constitutions of all five Central Asian republics, special provisions were made regarding the protection of women's rights.

During 1920s, when these measures were implemented, there was need for a cautious approach to deals with the situation of women's way of life. The *Zhenotdels* (women's sections for work among women, which existed at all levels of the Communist Party structure) were organized. As a results of which, women activists started to go house to house and started various women's clubs, cooperatives, shops, and special places where women learned to read and write without bothering men (Patnaik, 1989). In *Zhenotdels*, persuasion was the primary method of the work. The salaries of those who worked in these cooperatives provide a substantial contribution to the family budget. The *Dehqans* (peasants) were very much pleased with their wives as they involved themselves in earning money without violating the accepted moral standards of the society.

However, the slow progress of women's emancipation did not please the totalitarian regime, which was already gaining strength. To strengthen the movement, a new policy known as the *Khujum* (Advance) was introduced. The communists define it as a 'qualitatively new stage' in resolving the women's situation in Central Asia region. The introduction of *Khujum* artificially used as like a 'shock campaign'. By shifting its method from explanatory methods to mandatory implementation, the party implemented all Soviet laws and all party decrees (Pomfret, 1995). In fact, the women's question was made one of the major agenda to demolish the totalitarian power. At the end of 1927, all alternative voices had already been eliminated from Kazakh society. They come up with various reforms such as First Land and Water Reform, 1920-21, the Second Land and Water Reform, 1925-29, cooperation in agriculture and collectivisation since 1929. They also brought up reforms in culture, industry and other areas relating to women emancipation (Patnaik, 1989).

However, the psychological factor, which plays an important role in this matter, was ignored. Regardless of their rank or position, even party and Soviet workers, found it difficult to accept the idea of women walking around without the *paranja* (a veil covering the woman from head to foot). The common peoples also showed their unwillingness towards this situation. This resulted, the death of many women activists, members of village and district councils and leaders of women's clubs and libraries died at the hands of men. A many of those who were killed were rank and sole participants in the women's movement. A male terror campaign was launched against women and the party organs saw the fruits of their mistakes in hurry. On the other hand, it cannot be denied, that among the women, the aspiration for freedom was very high (Patnaik, 1989).

Moreover, the social factor also, not taken into consideration. Most of the population of the old cities comprises of small traders, craft workers and artisans had lost almost everything as a result of the industrialization. This leads to a development of hostile approach towards decisions of government. At the same time, the 'uncovering' of women did not bring any economic benefits for them (unlike the *dehqans*, who used labour of women in various branches of agriculture and the poorest sections of the urban population). Therefore, these artisans and small traders were come openly against emancipation of women.

At that time and later, it was generally believed that the provocation of clergy was regarded as crimes against women who had removed the *paranja*. They were also principally blamed for terrorist acts. However, there were some progressive clergy, who tried to convince the broad sections of the Muslim population under their influence and who realized the importance of women liberation. By interpreting the Quran in a new perspective, this section of the clergy expressed the view that the Quran did not allow, ban on participation of women in social and productive life and there is no need to wear the *paranja*. According to archival data, they even tried to organize their *Zhenotdels*. Thus, in *kishlaks* (village) of the Ferghana valley, a proclamation was disseminated, signed by the 'Head of the *Zhenotdel* of the Mursali-bibi Religious Administration', while appealing for women's emancipation not to be hindered; it also said that their religious education should not be forgotten. However, these kinds of attempts were rejected, by the official organs (Mahmood, 2005)

The open struggle with religion and the clergy was clearly expressed in the activities of the so-called Militant Atheists Union, which were organized everywhere. At the early 1920s the *Zhenotdels* favoured caution in their anti-religious propaganda and at the beginning of early 1930s there was no longer any question of this. According to K. Makarov, chairman of the union, there was no longer any point in being cautious. These Militant Atheist Unions forced everyone to an atmosphere of universal suspicion. Without any exception, all representatives of the clergy were considered as class enemies. They were demanded to return the mosques faithfully and this visualised their class 'hatred for the Komsomol (Communist Union of Youth) and the clubs'. But the war for the emancipation of women was not a war against any classes but it was against of world views. The social allegiance of its participants does not have any relations with emancipation of women, who found it difficult to give up notions of women' right that had been dominated their consciousness over centuries (Adle, 2005).

Generally, this battle was provoked by the basic, irregular methods of work used by the party committees. They organized prayer meetings in the mosques to agitate in favour of the *Khujum*, they also organized *paranja*-removing 'troikas' that even included the chief of police, and they sometimes took notes from husbands stating that they were uncovering their wives. Such violent

methods had an adverse effect on the women's movement itself, which gradually went into declining process.

Gradually, there seems to be improvements in the lives of women in Soviet Central Asia. Particularly in the achievement of universal literacy and successes in the spheres of technology, health care, education and science, which became free and accessible, transformed their status. For example, in the 1960s women made up, 70 per cent in Kazakhstan. At the same time, however, this was accompanied by ideological indoctrination, and the official communist ideology held the women's movement in strict check, defining the place of women in the overall party system. Despite a quota system for women, they accounted for only a small percentage of the country's leaders (Pogosian, 2014).

The patriarchal family structure was demolished by the Soviet. Mixed marriages, divorce, nuclear families etc. were gradually increasing in Kazakh society. At the end of 1970s, about two-fifths of the rural families were of modern urbanized size with minimum number of children. Despite of this women were still suffering from variety of social-economic problems. According to Mandel, "the lower participation rate of Central Asian women in social production to the fact that large number of children per family is not due to any economic necessity but due to cultural choice. This being so, in the situation of increasing prosperity of Central Asia, women are not under any pressure to work outside the home after already taken the pain of child birth and the burden of family house work, house old garden farming, and holing water from the well in winter and so on" (Patnaik, 1989). There may be many complexities of women with regards to their participation in Kazakhstan. Despite measures taken by the Soviet, still a number of women are outside the social production.

Special attention was paid to implementing this arrangement in the republics of Central Asia, where female cadres were not allowed to take the most important decisions. During 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, participation of women in political life was limited to slogans only, rather than action. They only came into limelight during the celebrations of International Women's Day, in 8th of March. The conditions of women were worsening in the socio-economic fields during these periods. Women labour forces were very low, although there were positive achievements in party

forums. This was mostly due to conservative thinking among men, who believes that women should limited themselves to house hold activities and who were against the employment of women in productive work.

Women working in agricultural sector face more painful and acute problem. However, in cotton production the role of female labour was highly valued, so the difficulties and deficiencies were concealed there. In such a scale, in no other span of time female and child labour were exploited in the cotton fields. Besides this, there was lack of normal social and living conditions for women along with the absence of fixed hours for manual labour during the cotton season. Overall, 90.6 per cent of those employed in physical labour in 1970 were women (Dave, 2007).

Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of perestroika in the mid1990s did not solve all the problems of women, especially in Central Asia. However, it make possible to talk about various unresolved issues and shortcomings like poverty among rural women, the high infant mortality rate, the lack of a tolerable home life and the shortage of pre-school institutions for children. It also visualise the absence of fixed working hours, especially during the season of cotton cultivation and harvesting, poor working conditions, low wages, a shortage of drinking water and inferior food. The conditions of working women and their daily life in industry were also not in good conditions. Many enterprises, which employed female labour, did not care about the hot climate of Central Asia region. Freeing women from heavy physical labour remained a burning issue in 1980s. In 1980s, according to experts' reports, the greatest proportion of women, who employed in physical labour industries, was to be found in 11 republics of the USSR, including Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan (Gleason, 2004).

Gender Issues during the Transition Period

Almost all the new states, which emerged after Soviet disintegration were faced a socio-economic crisis during the transitional period and it was mostly felt among female population. As a results of which, measures were taken to organize a structure that would directly address the issues of women in Kazakhstan. The Republic of Kazakhstan organized Women's Committees, a network of which has even spread to remote provinces. These committees have the experience of

working with the huge mass of the female population and also have access to power structures. Along with their own path of development all Central Asian countries are trying to secure self-determination in all areas of life. For all-round development of the countries, there are requirement of fully fledged participation of women in all spheres of life.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the government has promulgated various important policies on gender equality, followed by national action plans and tries their best to put these policies into practice (Lobue, 2007). Several national programs on specific women's issues were articulated. The policies on gender equality are clear and theoretically remain the part of the country's development plans. The realization of gender equality goals has remained very much a top-down process and characterized by high-level declarations and programs planned centrally over several years. Such national programs were formulated without taking any input from female stakeholders. A number of programs lack transparency and credibility. Even some programs, which are expected to improve women's status, such as the expansion of preschool education, do not include indicators to measure impacts of gender. In present day situation also Kazakhstan, remains underdeveloped in terms of having a systematic mechanism to monitor progress toward gender equality (Pomfret, 2013)

Kazakhstan's gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an average annual rate of 6.6 percent during the year 2005-2012 (Bendini, 2013) Although the Kazakh government has articulated a policy based on economic reform and diversification, but still national programs have invested in only a few areas like infrastructure improvement, construction, and finance. According to experts, these reforms have not benefitted women as compares to men, due grave underrepresentation of women in these sectors. For example, from the perspective of trade liberalization, "despite the fact that national legislations provide for gender equality, economic policy of the Central Asian countries in trade and services remain discriminatory with regard to women. Therefore, mainly men will enjoy benefits from trade liberalization and expansion of production and market (Tabyshalieva, 1995)."

Domestic Abuse

In Kazakh culture domestic abuse visualizes two persisting ideas about women. Firstly, to understand the ongoing situation properly, it is necessary to look at it from all perspectives. For instance, the ‘Society for Muslim Women’, which is a non-profit organization in Kazakhstan for Muslim women. According to them domestic violence is a private issue, and the state does not required to be involved in it (Snajdr 2005). This is fundamental among most Muslim women and does not encourage seeking professional help; rather it focuses on restoring the marriage system. The typical method of the organization is to shelter the women in their offices as the workers confront the husbands about their abuse. Despite everything that they see, they always persuade women that divorce is not the right way. It is very different from the belief of western view point that an abusive husband should be separated from his wife.

Other reason behind persistence of domestic abuse in Kazakhstan is that they viewed it as an acceptable form of punishment in a marital relationship. This indicates the views of society regarding condemning of women who do not fulfil traditional gender roles. It was acceptable by most of the people and supported physically abuse of wife for her mistakes. A huge section of both men and women agreed that censorship of domestic violence was acceptable in some instances. The degree of acceptability depended on the mistake with the minimal acceptable reason. The most acceptable reason was being neglecting the children and burning of food (Rani, 2009). Along with 22.1 percent of men, 26.1 percent of women agreed that if a wife was neglecting the children, then physical abuses upon women can be justified by husband (Ibid.). However, most of the Kazakhstanis women believed that domestic abuse was justifiable more often than men. Around 30.1percent of women believed that wife beating was acceptable as compared to 27.1 percent of men (Ibid.). Hence, the domestic abuse is a problem, which is partially because of the women’s mentality towards problem.

In order to stop domestic violence, the two attributes that posed a grave challenge for the government is acceptability and secrecy. The Kazakh government hardly gave any response to the issues of domestic abuse till 2009. Due to the pressures from various Non-Governmental Organizations the government has taken a stance. Kazakhstan’s Ambassador-at-Large, Madina

Jarbussynova, has sung the praises of Kazakhstan's initiative to enact 'On Prevention of Domestic Violence' in 2009 (Jarbussynova, 2017). On the other hand, all the press release and government documents are quite misleading, because since their implementation, the problem of domestic violence has actually got worsen day by day. As the Department of State in 2013, stated that one out of four families in Kazakhstan suffered from some form of domestic abuse (Nikolayeva, 2014). It is also noted that due to fear, economic insecurity and societal benefits most of the women in domestic abuse situations even don't report their husbands. This makes the situation more worsen. The police only intervene in a dispute, when they believe the situation is life threatening and if it isn't they do not encourage the woman to filed a case. In a way this has an adverse effect on the government of Kazakhstan. For instance, around 68 percent of female inmates are imprisoned due to the charges relating to domestic violence. From this angle it is clear that a practice, which is regarded as a 'family problem' can spread and influence the other sectors as well (OSCE, 2000).

Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking in Kazakhstan is the second major violation of women's rights. The sexual act grows rapidly because it is profitable work for both women and girl; there is a higher demand of forced prostitution or pornography. Both have had deplorable effects on the rights of women in Kazakhstan. The sex trafficker had importing women from various countries and they had also exporting women of Kazakhstan to other countries throughout the Asia and Europe.

Kazakhstan is the main source, destination, and transit of import and export for the trafficking of women according to the report of 2013. The practice of child pornography is growing or continuing issue in Kazakhstan for growing pornography. In spite of child pornography produced in the Kazakhstan, most of it is Russia. The traditional practice like bride kidnapping is also involve in sex trafficking which is unique to Kazakhstan. In this practice a man kidnapped a women and he forced her to marry without prior consent. These days' women are unsuspecting and forced in to marriage, though bride kidnapped can be unanimous rituals. The kidnapper paid large amount of money to the family of bride before they kidnapped the bride. Kidnappers in 51

percent cases escape from any types of conviction because most of the cases this form of trafficking is settled by her family itself (Gayle, 2016).

The Kazakhstan government is facing major problem in overcome this problem, because innumerable number of government officials involve in sex trafficking. Many top politicians are also involved in this industry but actual data is yet to be discovered. Their involvement has been reported by the victim of sex trafficking that most often they have seen government officials at the whorehouse who use forced prostitution. The border officials are also involved in this industry because they knowingly allow trafficked persons to the state. Many top officials like law enforcement officers are known to abuse the situation. The law enforcement officers' are protecting the traffickers, even encouraging trafficked brides to not pursue justice, they are also helping the transport forced prostitutes to whorehouses. In spite of knowing this is an alarming issue the state is also neglecting to overcome the problem and also neglecting any connection between government employees and sex trafficking. (Ginn, 2016).

In spite of many obstacles and late start, the government of Kazakhstan has made some serious attempt in combating human trafficking. For high school and college students the government of Kazakhstan is now providing training for law enforcement along with education. It is definitely going to help both boys and girls for their better education and to combat evils like sex trafficking. The Kazakh government has also ratified the U.N. Convention Against Human trafficking, amended criminal codes and created a deputy prime minister to deal with the situation of sex trafficking.

Again, probably the most important step that Kazakh government has taken was the Inter-agency Trafficking in Persons Working Group. On a quarterly basis this group reports government about the situation under the Trafficking in Person National Plan 2012-2013. This will definitely help to provide accountability for government officials and help to bring efficiency in combating the problem of human trafficking.

Economic Status of Women during Pre-soviet Era:

The economic organization of Kazakh society was based on nomadic pastoralism, prior to the massive Russian in-migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Mainly, it was determined by the climatic and geographical nature of the of the land areas. Seasonal migration was the basic characteristic of this economy, which changed the physical location of the economy four times during a year. During these periods the main production inputs includes livestock such as horses, sheep, goats, camels in some areas, and cattle in later periods. Herding and animal husbandry was the principal economic activity of the society. The regular back and forth moves from summer to winter pastures guaranteed the provision of fodder throughout the year. There was a huge distances between the winter and summer pastures. According Taizhanova (1995) and Chermak (1899), in Northern Kazakhstan these distances were around 50–70 km, where as in Central Kazakhstan the nomads often travelled up to 1000 km (one-way) during migrations (Aldashev, 2012).

According to Kazakh historians (Taizhanova, 1995), the element of kin is central to understand the economic relationships among Kazakh nomads, because the winter stops were organized around extended families (the so-called aul-q'stau), with typically consisting of several nuclear households (usually, closely related by kin), who were living together during winter. The household were generally monogamous nuclear families, which consists of a married couple and their young children. By taking in to account of larger kin groups (the so-called jazgy aul, which broadly corresponds to communes), and several extended families the summer pastures, were organized.

An individual's property rights on land were defined both by the extended family as well as at the level of community. Generally, winter stops were common property resources of extended families; on the other hand summer stops were belonging to common property resources of the communities. Generally, these were belongs to closed access groups, but the access was less strictly enforced, given the relative abundance of summer pastures. An individual had no property rights on land but on livestock it had private property rights.

Prior to 1917, from 17th century Russian migration into Kazakhstan has been started and continued until the October Revolution. It was developed in two large phases (Demko, 1969). In the first phase, it included Cossack military migration, which was comparatively small in size. The second wave of migration was massive, which was started in the 1880s and it helped in abolishing serfdom in Russia in 1861 (Galiev, 2009). In subsequent periods, the landless peasants started to move in large numbers into the European part of Russia. As a result of which, it created substantial tensions in and around the large cities. It had also an adverse effect upon the economic conditions of women.

Economic Status of Women during Soviet Era

During Soviet periods the feudal relations of production remained unchanged. The feudal and clan nobility, which owned the land, irrigation, cattle etc., has exploited the mass peasants groups. After the October Revolution, still wages were paid in kind to the workers. The agriculture of Kazakhstan was characterized by small size of holdings with primitive farming techniques. This resulted in productivity of labor in a very low level. The land relations system and acute shortage of labor leads to the emergence of 'Charikari' system. According to this system the share cropper has to receive as one-fourth or even one-fifth of the production. Cotton cultivation based on small scale farming was the main source of income from agriculture. Although there were large numbers of landless peasants, still there was shortage of labor. The 'Charikari' system extended the gaps between rich and poor (between landless peasants and land lord Kulaks). The conditions of women were miserable at that time. The rural villages were the source of cheap labor and the landlord employed women and children on a piece-rate basis. The wages were so much low that after working for a whole year, the laborers were unable to pay their food price provided by the employer (Patnaik, 1989).

During the colonial periods Central Asia was the chief source of agricultural raw materials. There was almost no industrialization in the region. There were no mechanical industries and only some processing type factories were available in Central Asia. Hence, the accumulation of wealth lies in Russian metropolitan cities. The existing relations of production prevented the peasants of Central Asia to transform themselves to a modern working class. Along with

capitalist relations, in agricultural sector there was prevalence of feudalism and gradually a culture of temporary labor force in agricultural sector develops in region (Patnaik, 1989).

The First Land and Water Reform, 1921-22, was regarded as milestone in the process of economic emancipation of women. It not only provided land to women, but also brought women in to agricultural sector from 1923. A large numbers of agricultural cooperatives were established in the region. This provides a new fuel to the women's movement (Patnaik, 1989).

With the proclamation of the 'victory of socialism' in late 1930s, it was wrongly believed that the social bases of religion had been abolished. The main cause behind women's religiosity was seen to be merely 'the harmful complacency of local workers in Central Asia who have permitted the curtailment of anti-religious work among women'. The major challenge for Soviet regime at that time was that how to attract female labour into the national production process. Discussions were held regarding participation of women in industrial production. The main focus was to employed women in those sectors where there was more likelihood of using female labour. At the same time, it was suggested that women are be utilized only in those sectors which did not involve lifting of heavy weights or dangerous physical loads. At the late 1920s, however, a tendency was developed for the equality of female and male labour forces. Gradually, this process was implemented and female labour began to be actively participated into all types of production. Many party and Soviet workers gave their opinion regarding employment of women in Central Asian labour force. For instance, some suggested that women should be employed in field of construction and they should be used in carpentry, in carrying bricks and in laying stone (Tabyshalieva, 2005).

By 1939, women had occupied 50 percent of male professions due to the forced equality. Realising woman's natural role and their capabilities, their participation increased in agricultural sector. This policy also had its negative impact. As Rizel stated, in 1932 one magazine wrote that female labour should be used exclusively in cultivation and industrial sectors (Chahryar, 2005). Due to the general and forcible inclusion of women in the *kolkhozs* (collective farms) without any basic facilities like kindergartens, bring misery for women. Women working in the hot sun with carrying their children in arms and on their backs gave rise to a pathetic situation. But, from

communist point of view, this was regarded as the high level of consciousness of *kolkhoz* women. In 1930, with a quick order the *Zhenotdels* were eliminated and the KUBT (Commission for the Improvement of Women's Labour and Life) and women's magazines were shut down in the year 1932. During these years owing to the ideological and political situation, the situation of women remains the same (Sangster, 1985).

However, during the Second World War periods, the governing bodies of the Soviet Union, once again wanted to revive the *Zhenotdels*, and include women in the national economy. Despite of this, women did not enjoy the same position and influence they had in the 1920s. To some extent it can be said that, the war conditions forced the authority to recognize women's role as individuals, workers and leaders. For Central Asian Republic, this has of great significance. During 1920s, public attitudes evolved; with regards to empower women, people became convinced that women could replace the men in any other field including socio-cultural, economic and political sphere. On the other hand there was a significance increase in the number of qualified women workers among the indigenous ethnic groups (Davletova, 1949). In this period, the number of women workers was doubled. Their number raised from 29 per cent of the workforce in 1940 to 54.4 per cent in 1945. At the end of 1950s, the proportion of women working in different sectors like education, science, and health care has surpassed the number of men (Tabyshalieva, 1998,).

During 1950s and 1960s a large number of female machine operators were introduced in agriculture to escape them from heavy manual labour. However, from 1961, their number was started decreasing and by the late 1960s, there was hardly any operator in this sector. According to the party organs, it is the results of arrogant attitude among male directors. During cotton ploughing time, it was not possible on the part of women to handle the crude SKhM-48 and KhVS-12 cotton harvesters with their technical maintenance. It was highly unsophisticated for women.

Although during those years, there was also a tendency to equate male and female labour, on the other hand physical loads for men and women were totally ignored. The physical body of women did not suit them in sectors like mines, construction of railway and heavy industries. This was

natural and biological make-up. The introduction of machines in cotton cultivation, not only brought about an ecological crisis but also sacrificed the health of millions of girls and women in Kazakhstan (Tabyshalieva, 1998).

The thoughtless cotton monoculture leads to drying up of Aral Sea. The excessive use of chemical pesticides to cultivate the cotton plant increased the maternal and infant mortality rates. In this periods also the household labour of women were not recognized. In Central Asia, household technology was not developed at all.

Although, Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of perestroika in the mid-1990s gave some relieve to women, the issue of the conflict between housework and work outside the home was rarely addressed. It did not succeed in overcoming patriarchal attitudes but it changed its form. Women were leaving with their old circle of obligations in the family and imposing on her the status of a worker in public production. The efforts of government to solve women's problem was insufficient to combats the problem.

Economic Status of Women in Independent Kazakhstan

Women's economic empowerment is foremost importance for achieving gender equality and combating poverty. It is also valuable from the perspective of harnessing women's economic potential and their contribution to the country's economy. The Soviet system legacy indicates that during this period representation of women in the labour force in Kazakhstan remains high, especially in compared to other developing countries. Despite of this, gender-based imbalances still exist in society. The position of women in the labour market is determined by their equality with men in regards to employment opportunities.

Labour Market Segregation

The republic of Kazakhstan exhibits occupational segregation in formal labour market. Out of total employment, women are representing over 70 percent in spheres that are considered to be traditional for them, such as education and health care. Women are also showing their high

representation in other sectors like food services, the hospitality industry, financial services, and insurance. The industrial sector is dominated by men with over three-quarters of employees in mining, transport, storage, and construction. They account for almost two-thirds of workers in sector such as electricity and gas supply, water supply, and waste management. These sectors also regarded as most profitable, with the highest-paying jobs. On the other hand women are employed in low profitable sectors. Industry constitutes 36.0 percent of country's GDP and mining consists of 22 percent, education holds 3.4 percent, and health care and social services sector for 2 percent only. The women predominating sector, particularly education and health, are paid through the state budget. Hence, it offers low salaries and limited opportunities for advancement of career. The employment of women in agricultural sector shows a declining trend. In 2002, it contains 34.7 percent, where as it decreased to 27.4 percent in 2010 (UNIDO, 2015).

The reasons are many for women's employment in the more lucrative professions. In terms of work and family responsibilities, public sector jobs are considered to be more flexible. Gender-based stereotypes also play a major role, and very few women are able to enrol in the post-secondary level technical programs. This reflects women's lack of qualifications, needed for the highest-paying jobs. The Kazakhstan Labour Code provides a list of 299 specific jobs that are prohibited for women, these includes mostly the construction and transport sectors. The prohibited jobs require heavy physical labour with harmful and hazardous conditions, hence the list protect women from harmful work. However, some women's rights activists are claiming that restricting access to jobs is discriminatory and hence, the list should be abolished. The financial crisis also forced Kazakhstan to prioritized job creation in male dominated sectors such as construction, communications, and infrastructure, where there could be employment of less female workers.

Besides, horizontal segregation, the Kazakh women are suffering from vertical segregation in labour market. They are underrepresented in leadership and managerial positions within the industries. As World Bank data reveals that, 33.3 percent of small private enterprises have top female managers, around 21.0 percent of medium-sized firms have women in management positions, and only 9.8 percent of large enterprises have top female managers in 2013. According

to UNDP estimates, overall, only 25 percent of firms have any top female management in Kazakhstan (UNDP, 2013).

Unemployment

Between, 2001-2008, the Kazakh official unemployment rate was gradually decreased from over 10 percent to below 7 percent. Although to some extent, the gap between male and female unemployment rates fell, female unemployment rates remained 2.6 percent above male in 2008. In 2001, around 14 percent of women were unemployed, as compared to 10 percent of men. One of the most notable aspects of this period was the decrease in unemployment of the youngest partner. In early 2000, like most of the developing countries, Kazakhstan also suffered from considerable youth unemployment. The unemployment rate in 2001 was 24 percent for boys between the age group 15-19 and 29 percent for girls of the same age groups (ILO, 2010). In 2008, it succeeded to lower these rates to slightly over 6 percent. Although, to a lesser extent, this succeeded for the 20-24-year olds too, but between, 2001-2008 the unemployment rates for the 25-29 aged remained at approximately the same level. During this period, the female unemployment rate was about 40 percent over the male rate. During the year 2008, jointly on average 113,000 females between the age group of 15-29 were unemployed. Only 8.5 percent of this group were economically active at that time (ILO, 2010). According to the official figures, in the last quarter of 2009, about 109,000 females between the age group 15-29 were unemployed. This includes 7.1 percent of the 15-24 aged and 11.2 percent of the 25-29 age groups (MDG 3, 2010).

The Global Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Women and Men

The Republic of Kazakhstan appears to have survived the 2008–2009 global financial crises in a well manner. It took various anti-crisis and recovery measures including monetary, fiscal, and structural measures, along with initiatives to stimulate labour demand and employment creation. The sectors that were mostly affected by the crisis, was construction, oil and gas, which have dominated by male employees. However, it is important to consider, that women in these sectors are often concentrated in poorly paid subsidiary activities and their situation was very much

vulnerable. The growing self-employed population in Kazakhstan may be a cause for concern, because women are more likely than men to be engaged as workers in the informal sector. In informal sector, worker gets lower wages with lack of unemployment protection and other benefits. The particular needs of women relating to maternity and sick leave, the informal work contributes to women's vulnerable situation.

The anti-crisis programs of Kazakhstan did not include any specific actions to protect women affected from the crisis. The impact of the economic crisis on women in Kazakhstan has yet to be evaluated in a full-fledged manner. The officially registered unemployment rate was increased between the year 2008 and 2009. The representation of men from 2006 to 2008 was about 30–33 percent of registered unemployed individuals. In 2009, this figure increased to 35 percent (ADB, 2013). Since then unemployment has decreased for both sexes, but in case of women the situation was same with 67 percent of the total registered unemployed population. According to studies of the economic status of single-parent families in Kazakhstan, where majority of them are headed by women, found that from 2006 to 2008, there was decreased in poverty more rapidly among male-headed households, but on the other hand, “the share of the poor represented by female-headed households increased by 10 percent, pointing to an increasing vulnerability of female-headed households” (Kochher, 2013). Again, families that were in a vulnerable condition before the crisis, “especially large families with many children, households with disabled family members, single-parent families (especially women-headed households), and migrant families, have not recovered to the same extent as the general population or as national statistics would suggest”. There is need to give greater consideration in national programs to women affected from the crisis (ibid.).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2011 noted that “the global economic crisis cut GDP growth levels in Central Asia by half, exacerbating existing high levels of poverty and income inequality and further weakening the business climate” and suggested that key reforms are required for further growth and development. As the government of Kazakhstan continues to address the problems emerged from the global economic crisis, it will necessary to understand in their part, if ignored, how gender inequalities, could produce negative impact on country's development and growth. As a developing country, Kazakhstan not

only requires reforms to attract investment, but also on adopting best practices for realizing gender equality (ADB, 2013).

Gender and Wage Disparities

Since, 2005 there was steady increase in women's minimum wage and as of 2010, the average earnings of women still remained only 66 percent of men's earning. Since, 2005 there was also decrease in the wage gap, though this trend has not been entirely consistent. In the year 2007, the MDG 3 targets were revised and this minimizes the gender wage gap. At the end of 2012, there was slightly decreased in the gender wage gap between women and men with 69.6 percent. In the year 2011, the President doubled the salaries of public sector, which was twice of the 2008 rates. However, advocates of women's rights point out that previous salary increases have not kept up with inflation (ADB, 2013).

To some extent gender wage gaps are attributed (UNECE) to "differences in human capital endowment and differences in job characteristics." Disparities between women and men with regards to salaries are partially due to the specific patterns in women's employment and the choices that they make. As for example, some women choose specific fields of study or take time out from work to raise children. On the other hand, some choose jobs that are compatible with child-care responsibilities and ignore promotions for the same reason (UNECE, 2009).

Kazakhstan is considered to be a country with a particularly high "proportion of the unexplained earnings gap" (UNEE, 2009) for the region, which indicates the existence of gender discrimination. In some cases it can be found that women are paid less because they are women and not merely due to their involvement in lower-paid jobs or industries or take time out from formal employment. According to the Gender Assessment Survey conducted by ADB, in 2013, it was noted that there is common forms of discrimination and labour law violations exist in Kazakhstan. They are manipulated in various ways, such as the practice of asking young women about their marital and family status during job interviews, lack of promotions, non-payment of wages, hiring without a written contract, and abuse of trial periods etc. It was also found that women themselves are not always aware of their rights and do not act accordingly to protect

them. Despite open discriminatory practices in Kazakhstan, the gaps between the legal principles of equality and implementation mean that “it is thus difficult to bring to the courts cases about discrimination in the workplace,” and very few organizations are addressing this issue (Somach and Rubin, 2010).

Historical background of Political Status of Women

During pre-Soviet era Kazakh society was not uniformly structured. Men’s control over women not only depended up on religion, but also on tribal custom and kinship structures. The Muslims laws like *sharia* and *adat* are likely to be highly patriarchal in public life as well as strictly gender segregated. The sedentary populations lived more compliance with the sharia, whereas the nomadic peoples followed their own customary practice (*adat*) extensively. Everywhere the behaviour of the women regulated strictly, if a woman ever tries to break the rules, norms and traditions of the patriarchy system where male are dominated, she and her family or relatives were punished. A woman was first expected to be under the control of her father, after marriage she remain under the control of her husband and his relative and even under the control of her sons.

Under the former Soviet Union both the women’s organizing and political activism has a long history (Clements, 1979). During the Soviet era women were very much active in the field of politics, and the transition to democracy, though both the periods created very different contexts and thus challenges for women. Under socialism, the formal equality was state sanctioned and imposed from above by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The state claimed that both women and men had equal rights and thus promoted women’s education and employment, passed labour laws, legalized abortion, provided generous maternity leave and benefits, and offered virtually free child care. The women reach to the certain political and economic goals, such as unprecedented heights in science, arts, industry, and education because of the socialist policies of the government. The literacy rate of both men and women was very much impressive 99 percent, and almost half of the work force was women in the year 1990. The main aim of Soviet government is to provide full employment to both men and women and almost 90 percent women were either employed or they were in the school (Rakow, 2005).

At the same time there was a discussion that whether the rulers of socialist government were completely genuine in their declared goals of establishing gender equality on the practical level. For instance, women when they came to lower and medium level political management were getting well within the limits of the unspoken 30 percent quotas, they remained underrepresented in high political positions within the CPSU hierarchy. The women had double burdens because they always wanted to work outside the home as well as they need to take care of household responsibilities like to take care of child, and non paid domestic labour such as cooking, washing the clothes etc.

Note that the CPSU encouraged women (and men) to become active, especially when needed during certain historical periods (for example, during World War II or the 1950s exploration of new agricultural lands). During the Soviet period, the fact that community activity is political was institutionalized by the state. For example, in the late 1970s, statutory standing commissions, such as those For the Problems of Labour and Everyday Life of Women and Mother and Child Protection, were organized. However the women were not permitted to organise independently to advance their own interests outside the state structure. All aspects of governance and discourse; political opposition was illegal which was controlled by CPSU.

There is a separate department of women's organisation of central and local trade unions, the Young Communist League, and the CPSU. For instance, the committee Soviet Women's was created in 1941 and it lasted up to the duration of Soviet rule and remained as a political body in the independent Russian Federation (Buckley 1997). The women participation in formal politics is being the main focus of published work, and their representation in elective bodies. It is an important contribution to understand the women's groups under the Soviet political system, Browning (1987) points out that the participation of women in social organizations has not been a subject of inquiry by Western writers, even though women need to take comprehensive participation at the local level, for instance, in trade unions. Social organizations played an integral role in Soviet politics. Significantly, there were women only social organizations or councils called the *Zhenskie Sovety* or, commonly, the *Zhensovety* (Fabian, 2010).

With an aim to increase women's political consciousness through different economic, political, and social activities, Khrushchev called for a renewal of women organisation throughout the country just before that the Zhensoveti have a long history but became widespread during the 1950s and 1960s. Khrushchev's call was systematic and reality because during the war enumerable numbers of men got killed so that women need to take participate more actively in the politics field as well as in the other field also they should take responsibility. They were situated at different levels (for instance republic, *oblast*, and local) both in the work place and in communities. They were also involved thousands of women in the work place. Zhensoveti's activity may be differed but the ultimate goal is to provide for better working conditions for women, women's education, child care, and sometimes protection of women against cruel husbands.

The Zhensoveti were acknowledged as part of the trade union organizations at factories, plants, *sovkhozes* (Soviet-style agricultural enterprises), and so on. CPSU provided heavy assistant to the trade union and it was also directed Zhensoveti in terms of their functions as lobbying organizations on behalf of women. Zhensoveti was working as voluntary organizations but under the protection of local trade union Women's Commission. Due to the control of CPSU and local trade union the Zhensoveti had serious limitations. Despite the contrary that was the only way of women's lobbying on the grassroots level. Leaders of the Zhensoveti were trying to defend the economic rights of the women and their families, that's why modest structure of them should be acknowledged.

In the year 1980s Mikhail Gorbachev, then the general secretary of USSR started a reformist agenda which started to expand political freedom. The reformist policy of Gorbachev like perestroika enabled upon criticism and without prosecution made it possible for women to organise independently. He called for the recovery of the Zhensoveti and for them to exist under the national Women's Committee. In his speech Gorbachev promoted the Zhensoveti to the 27th Communist Party Congress: "Women's councils could help to resolve a wide range of social problems arising in the life of our country" (Browning, 1987). A year later, in 1987, there were 24,000 women's councils, and grassroots women's initiatives began to emerge (Konstantinova, 1996). As Browning examined that during this period one of the women's groups was formed in the city of Petropavlovsk in northern Kazakhstan naming as the Business

Women's Association. We argue that the Business Women's Association is an example of a women's grassroots organization that followed in the footsteps of the Zhensovet, trying to raise the level of political and social activism for women.

Women's Political Status after Independence

Radical changes take place in the economic and political landscape of the country with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, especially it has had negative impact in Kazakhstan with the absence of necessary infrastructure for capitalist market driven economy. This creates spiralling unemployment, poverty, and crime rates. This was transforming to the capitalism it also laid economic crisis and increased gender discrimination. On the basis of statistics women were having 51.4 percent of Kazakhstani population, yet a sizeable number of women holding formal political positions and benefiting from viable, successful business are comparably low. Women lost 726,000 jobs in Kazakhstan in between 1990 and 1994. In the year 1993, more than two-third women were registered as unemployed (Bauer, 1997). There are numerous number of women who were paid low price, and the low qualification labour is as twice as high as the number of men. The women of Kazakhstan are unrepresented among managers leaders and in higher posts even number of Kazakh women were living in poverty in spite of having majority of women higher education.

On an affirmative note, according to the constitution of Kazakhstan discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited. Officially the Kazakh government has begun to acknowledge some gender issues since the late 1990s. For instance, in the year 1999 the government approved the National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The New Action Plan includes twelve priorities bunch around four principle directions of activity, including the "economic advancement of women" (Kazakhstan Govt. Resolution No. 999, 19.07.1999, 123). Despite there are many welcome steps some issues are still remain which should be improve like the status of women and the economic crisis whatever they face. To protect and promote their interest the women of Kazakhstan need to work hard. And, grassroots organizing is one of the important ways for women to promote their interest and survival.

All the problem of the women will be solved with the increasing role of women in the society, all the priority areas has mentioned in the Beijing platform for action (1995). Henceforth, the basic direction in the activity of the bureau has become the training of women for political leadership. It is very much important for Kazakhstan because only few women occupy management positions. For instance, there are 12 percent women are the member of the parliament among them only one woman is a minister of the chairman of the recently formed National Commission on Family and Women's Affairs. Of course, in case of local government the number of women representing slightly more but nowhere in local governmental it exceeds 20 percent. Actually, a traditional gender pyramid has developed the higher the level of authority, the fewer women (Khassanova, 2002).

To conduct training programs on women's leadership in the various regions of the country from early 1997 to late 1999 the bureau worked with the many organisation like Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan and donor agencies the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the U.S. Information Agency, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and the British Know How Foundation etc. About the political struggle for their rights, for equal participation in the society, and for position of powers of the women various teachers from the United States, Great Britain, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan shared their knowledge with women. In all these seminars and training programmes near about two hundred women participated. There was a camp in the year 1997 called summer camp where fifty women from all over the regions of the country were simultaneously studied. The bureau also supported a number of women's meetings in other regions of the republic, committed to the role of international organizations in the solution of women's problems, women's leadership, legislative measures for protecting women's rights, the growth and development of women's NGOs, and similar issues (Khassanova, 2002).

For the first time the women from the remote areas of the state those who are educated enough and active but could not take participate due to lack of information, they felt their own strength after attaining the seminars and training programs. The New branches of the Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan were established, from the six organizations in the year 1997 to increases its numbers to twenty-three in the year 1999. New NGOs on women have started to appear. Surprisingly the numbers of NGOs in Kazakhstan has increased to one hundred while,

assembling the lists of women's organisation in the republic. Often women talk about the need for a women's political party (USAID, 2016).

Before the presidential elections and the election of the local representative bodies of the government and the parliament, the women's NGOs were active in the year 1998-99. The women's NGOs in Almaty developed a coalition called Women's Electoral Initiatives within a very few time. The coalition provide the training to the women for running of elective offices, working with government, and working with mass media to create real opportunities for women. In August 1999, the first political women's party, Political Alliance of Women's Organizations, was registered; it has been struggling for positions in representative bodies at all levels of power (USAID, 1999).

Women's Participation in Political and Public Life

There are differences of opinion between the women and men in Kazakhstan about their governance and different priorities for the development of their country. The numbers of representation of Kazakh women in political office are very low and they have not been able to achieve the critical proportion (30–40 percent) considered necessary for an effective voice in political decision making or agenda setting. The government set new targets, to met its targets in 2007 for gender equality in education under MDG 3 (promote gender equality and empower women), which comprises increasing the participation of women in legislative and executive bodies. The Civil Service Agency showed the data that 56 percent of all public sector employees were women as of April 2011, yet female civil servants occupied only 9.4 percent of political positions (Satymbekova, 2016).

Women in Elected Office

Both in the national and local representation of women has decreased after independence, although in January 2012 election the number of representation of women has increased in the Mazhilis (the lower house of the parliament), up from almost 18-22 percent, representing five

more female members but the number women representation in the senate (the upper house) remained unchanged at 4.3 percent.

Women make up only 17 percent of the total number of delegates in the country as a whole within *maslikhats* (locally elected assemblies), but this figure varies significantly by region to region. For instance, the women of Kostanay Oblast have achieved almost 30 percent representation, on the other hand in South Kazakhstan Oblast; they consist of fewer than 4 percent of delegates (Kazakh Agency of Statistics. 2011). With every election women's representation in *maslikhats* has been decreasing, despite the fact that an increasing number of women are standing as candidates locally (IGPN, 2010).

Women's Underrepresentation in Governance

It is clearly shown that the men are the dominating factor in the governance of the Kazakhstan including decision-making positions. Although women secured the majority of civil servants, they hold only 8.8 percent of high level positions in central executive offices. There are three female ministers (they are the ministers of economic integration, labour and social protection, and health) out of a total of 18 (they are the prime minister and 17 line ministers). In all the ministries combined, there are five female executive secretaries and four female deputy ministers (MDG, 2010).

Women are more likely to hold decision making positions in regional and local governance, at the lowest level of office, in rural settlements. There are no women in the 16 oblasts occupied the position of akims (head of local govt.), and there are only five deputy *akims* in the country. There are only three women who occupy the office of akim at the *raion* (district) level, and 17 percent of women are occupying the office of deputy *akims* at the district level. There are 265 female akims or 11 percent of total among leaders in rural areas (i.e., regions, towns, and villages). According to the above figure which indicates that the power in terms of national and regional leadership is not in the hand of women, the fact that there are women leaders representing the interests of towns and villages in rural areas is important for ADB activities. These women

leaders should be engaged as resources for ADB project development and implementation (ADB, 2013).

Structural Barriers to Women Entering Government

From the above mentioned that gender equality strategy includes the goal of achieving 30 percent women representations at the decision making levels of government. For bringing about change in the policy there is no other any mechanism. The equal rights of women in the field of parliamentary representation through an attempt to introduce 30 percent quota for women got failed (CEDAW's requirement for the use of temporary special measures). The activism of women in the field of politics has been increased, but yet there are no more sign of women entering in to the office. For instance, in the 2007 elections, the number of female candidates running for Parliament and officially registered on party lists increased 1.7 times, yet there was only little change in the composition of Parliament or in the *maslikhats*. A study of active political parties found in Kazakhstan that “almost non have set gender equality and/or equal opportunities of women and men as one of their political objectives, nor do they have strategies for increasing women’s representation be it on the party list and/or in the national or local assemblies.” Overall, to engage the women in the political campaigns the electoral system does not offer incentives to the party (UNDP, 2005).

The position of the women in the society is one of the major obstacle to entering to the political office (for example, their unequal access to the financial and networking resources needed to conduct a campaign), as well as the burden of trying to balance a political career with women’s socially attribute responsibilities. There is widespread pattern that there is limited opportunity of the women in the field of politics as women are not best suited for leadership. As a Member of Parliament said about the low number of women in political office, “In our mentality, we still have a banal and cynical stereotype: a cook cannot lead the State” (ADB, 2013).

The government supported the establishment of the school for women’s leadership mainly through regional branches of the National Commission for Women’s Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy. The NGOs and the international organisations are appeared as primary

actors. In the Tomiris Program Gender in politics was one theme (2004-2007), which completed with the formation of the Women's Leadership School national network. There are 65 NGOs in this network in the country, with Almaty, Astana, and regional centres hosting the women politicians club. In a sociological survey which was conducted in the year 2008 with 1500 respondents in the seven different regions which indicated that 70 percent respondents viewed that women hardly have leadership skills than men. Leadership of all major parties are dominated by men, the focus on improving the skill of women may not be sufficient to address some of the most serious obstacle that women usually face in entering to the politics. Still there need to support the women extensively to overcome the women from the male dominated society or environment (ADB, 2013).

Engagement with Civil Society

Both women and men can participate in the public life and influence in policy making through Civil Society organizations (CSOs). The NGOs of Kazakhstan has developed highest level among Central Asian republic (USAID, 2010). Over 30,000 NGOs in Kazakhstan in 2010 according to the data provided by the Ministry of Justice, an extensive increase over previous year, attributed to legal changes in 2009 that improved the environment for CSOs. NGOs can include public associations, foundations, religious organizations, political parties, and some professional associations. However, according to the view of experts, overall the number of active NGOs is considerably lower than the number of registered NGOs, and it estimated that there are 200 active organizations (ADB, 2013).

There are some women groups which are account for about 300 NGOs, and these are likely to concentrate on topics that are "closely linked to the socially approved roles for women or concerns of women: home and family, education, health and social services." There are also some women NGOs which advocate the work for gender equality and regularly analyse the intensity through legislation and policy implementation formal commitments are accomplished. National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy are cooperated with NGOs, and several line ministries consult with, or at least include, NGOs in their working groups. In addition to this, since 2005 the process of "social orders" the government has

formalized a tender mechanism through which NGOs bid for state funds to implement projects aimed at solving social problems. There are significant contributions of women's NGOs, which should be noted that only for limited number of spheres the government engages with such organisations (i.e., women's affairs and social issues). In other spheres, such as economic development, women's NGOs are not necessarily included as key partners (Miranda, 2005).

CSOs likely limited to the urban areas, particularly Almaty and Astana. NGOs addressing social issues have "begun to engage more in outreach work in the community and to assist the development of NGOs in the rural areas. However, effective rural NGOs are few and sparsely distributed." There are some women's NGOs, which aimed at addressing the social issues, have produced important links with women of rural area, both through outreach activities and the development of the organisation which are related to son or daughter, but still there are limited opportunities for rural women to engage in civil society. In the year 2011, ADB has funded the creation of a database of gender and development related organizations in Central and West Asia Developing Member Countries (including Kazakhstan) which is accessible on the ADB website (ADB, 2013).

The project related to gender equality or empowerment of women funded by local sources is not sufficiently developed, so women's NGOs are still heavily depended on foreign donors and grants. There is an interesting development of Kazakhstan is that which promote the corporate social responsibility. There are numerous large multinational corporations who have engaged with NGOs and some other local organizations to help the different projects mainly which have centre of attraction on orphans and youth, protecting the environment, promotion of culture, and workforce development. Private sector supports has not attracted to the gender issue, it is worth mentioning measures to develop the inclusion of women's NGOs in corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Civil Society should recognized the positive contribution of women, but the fact that the NGOs are also dominated by men they are holding the top positions in the NGOs (including women's NGOs) which is itself promoting gender inequality. Generally NGOs are financially weak, unable to give high salaries, and it is not so prestigious to attract the public. For all these reasons,

women face little competition with men for jobs in the nongovernment sector. Rather, NGOs likely to attract female employees, those who are financially sound they need not to support their family financially. Significantly the development of NGOs took place during the time when the social services sector was changing and many women had lost their jobs. “Thus women started small organizations as a means of survival. The diversion of women into NGO work can be seen as another aspect of the misrepresentation of women’s labour force participation and a loss of highly educated professionals and their skills to the wider economy” (Somach and Rubin, 2010). There are many women who need to manage the transfer of their leadership skills either the political or private spheres while women become leaders in the NGO sector, According to CSOs, “the attempts of women’s NGOs to become a real and quite influential force in the political life of Kazakhstan are more or less ignored by the ruling party and political stakeholders” (IGPN, 2010).

Summary:

Despite various government programme and policies the conditions of women has remains the same. At present also women are facing discrimination both inside as well as outside the family. A large numbers of reports can be found regarding torture, wife burning, molestation and sexual abuse. Though in the educational sphere the condition of women seems to be in a better condition, in political and economic point of view women are still lagging behind. Despite large numbers of legal provisions the conditions of women is still miserable in Kazakhstan. This posed a grave challenges to the Kazakh administration and to make Kazakhstan a global power. To some extent we can say that, the role of state administration and its apathetic attitude also becomes hurdles in the path of women empowerment. In such a situation the role of civil society and educated mass has become very much important.

CHAPTER- 3

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

Over the years education brings changes in women. It develops women as a complete and matured human being. Knowledge and awareness help them in critical thinking regarding their own lives and family members. According to Ginzberg (1966) educated women have considerable choice regarding their marriage, starting the family and the size of the family. They have freedom of choice about working outside home.

According to Sddiqui (1987) the attitude of women towards family planning is influenced by education. Women, at least with some level of education favour the family planning practice. Education enhances her power to make family planning decisions. They like to have small family size. The positive association between education and the adoption of family planning helped women to adopt a reasonable attitude towards family size. Closely associated with the adoption of family planning measure is the acceptance of a small family norm. Education enhances women's health awareness, awareness about the location of health centres or hospitals and family planning services. Overall women status improves. Education and knowledge gives women the power to reason and help to fight against social injustice. In an article by UNESCO, it is revealed that education has positive impact on the life of women within home as well as lives outside home.

The mother who is having with formal schooling, the children as well as the family is greatly benefitted. The education of the mother will reflect on the survival, health and the performance of the children on their performance in the school. According to the report there are five areas of benefit such as women liberty or independency, welfare of the family, size of family and the economy. The women can exercise their rights, they also can perform their responsibilities as a citizen and they will be unable to get more inform to make more choices only through the education.

Batliwala (1993) tried to measure the term empowerment as power over resources and decision making. She tried to explain what the empowerment of women implies in social, economic and political terms. Education is central to process of empowerment. Education as a dynamic process of learning helps women to gain meaningful information, knowledge and skills. With their growing strength women begin to participate in the decision making process of the family, village and in the community equally and she can also uphold her rights, liberty and duties with their own choice.

Historical background of Education System of Kazakhstan

Education of women in pre-soviet Central Asia was almost in a zero level. Due to cultural norms and patriarchy women were not allowed to write. It was limited to few bourgeoisie class people, who dominated the rest. The literacy rate during this period was around only 2 percent. However, because of the efforts of Communist party there was sharp increase in the literacy rate. By 1934, the literacy rate reached to 70 percent. There were 1,915 schools, opened in Central Asia region till 1924. Universal compulsory education was introduced in the region like other parts of USSR. With this there was gradual improvement in women's education. During 1920, a decree was passed by the Soviet government to eliminate illiteracy from Central Asia. In 1918, provisions were made to teach students in their mother tongue. Schools for literacy known as ABC schools were opened in most part of the region. Until, 1921, the circle of ABC schools reached to 1000 with 50,000 students in Turkestan region. Special women group were set up by taking in to accounts the local situation. Political activist and local activist were mobilized for propagating women's literacy. During the initial years co-educational schools were not successful. By observing this situation special schools for women were setup in 1923-24. In the beginning around 1,786 girls were attended such types of schools in Turkestan. Along with this co-educational schools were also setup for girls. Initially these schools opened in towns and district centers, mainly in European populated areas. Later it was spread to all other areas. In the beginning there were separate rooms for girls, but in later periods it was mixed up. Another type of schools was setup in the mid-1920s for young peasants in rural regions. However, it failed to attract peasant women. Various vocational schools were also setup by the authority. As a result of which at the end of 1930s the Soviet government had able to create a special women cadre,

which could be able to act as torch bearer, for the emancipation of women (Patnaik, 1989).

Structure of Education System in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is a country of having 9th largest in its size of land in the world in accordance with the earth surface and developed economically more than upper middle class. In the 2011 census the population of the Kazakhstan was counted as 16.4 million and among them one fourth population was 14th years old or even younger. The education system of Kazakhstan comprise like Pre-school, Primary School, Basic Secondary school(Lower), Upper Secondary school which can also be called as vocational or general school as well as post Secondary and tertiary which is study up to Graduated and Post Graduate level. According to the constitution and the law of education, the students are provided with the free and compulsory education from Pre-school, Primary School, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary Education (<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28295/decb-kaz.pdf>).

There are 57 percent of the Kazakhstan's public school (primary and secondary) out of 7,696 public school are ungraded, it means they do not have sufficient students of the same year group of its own class so that they are forced to make them study together to the different age group students in the same class room. The trends of International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measured the quality of the Outcome of Secondary Education is the below international level. Smaller schools in rural locations tend to perform considerably worse than bigger schools in urban areas (OECD, 2014).

The lower than anticipated results in international assessment are among the principal factors that motivate the development of ambitious plans for reforming education- a sector to which Kazakhstan traditionally attaches great importance. These plans include measure to re-structure the system, foster excellence, develop teachers and functional literacy, expand pre- school education, introduce new financing mechanisms, improve infrastructure, and modernise vocational education and training. Following are the structure and organisation of the education system of Kazakhstan.

Pre-school education

Pre-school organisation is providing preschool education to children from the age group between 0-6 years. The organisation like Orphanages, Extracurricular organisation, and boarding schools are taking care and ensuring the pre-school education of the children who are left with the guidance and care of their parents. According to NSA data, in recent years the numbers of public kindergartens has multiplied reaching 7221 establishments in 2012 with net enrolment of 584305 children, which was 151% increase in enrolment compared to 2007 (Ozisik, 2015).

Primary and secondary education

The school system in Kazakhstan is a complex web of different types of schools. In 2011 there were 7696 schools, of which 7584 public and 112 private. Of the 7584 public school, Ministry of Education and Science (MESRK) and by regional authorities was administered the 7567 Public School and 17 by other Ministries. Of the 7567 schools under auspices of MERSK and of regional authorities, 7465 were general education schools, and 102 were organisations providing education to children with special educational needs (OECD, 2014).

At the age of six or seven years the primary education starts and it lasted up to four years. Two years of general upper secondary education or technical education which takes three to four years and vocational education follow the five years lower secondary education. Students can attain two-three years of technical or vocational training programmes, those who have successfully completed the general upper secondary education (UNESCO, 2015).

In the school, “Ungraded School” (UGS), gymnasium, lyceum the secondary education is provided and in the subject like mathematics, physics, language, etc. which are the core subjects, the school is providing in-depth knowledge. Mostly in the rural areas there is lack of students in each year group of its own class, therefore, the teachers are teaching the students of different age groups in the same class in the small school and ungraded or incomplete school. The Kazakhstan have provided free and compulsory education in such a way that each and every part, even the smallest communities of the nation are entitled to have a school if they will have five children of

compulsory school age. Of the 7465 general education schools in 2011, 4221 (57 percent) are “ungraded schools” (56 percent in 2012), though these catered for just 15.9 of the student population (15.4 percent in 2012) (ibid).

Typically schools in Kazakhstan teach either in Kazakh or Russian with the other as their second language and English as their third. The percentage of pupil attending Kazakh-language school has increased in recent years, and by 2011 was around 63.8 percent. There are 29 Turkish lyceum exists in Kazakhstan, which were teaching in four different languages, including Turkish. And a number of schools, generally schools for gifted children or international schools offer multilingual education, which in practice means teaching more subjects in English or offering additional language (OECD, 2014).

Higher Education:

Those students or citizens who have completed the General Secondary, Technical and Vocational or further education are eligible to pursue Higher Education. Post Secondary and Tertiary education has offered by the 146 Universities, Academies, Institutes, Conservatories and Higher School and Higher College in the year 2011/2012. After minimum of four years of Study and minimum 128 ECTS the Graduate students can secure the academic Bachelor degree. The process of admission can be held on the basis of the result of National Unified Test (UNT), at the end grade, which is the combine of both university entrance examination and upper secondary school leaving certificate. It covered 79 percent of all secondary school graduates in 2011. Kazakhstan joined the Balogna process in 2010. According to the Law on Education (2007) the following levels and qualifications have been set up (European Commission, 2012):

1. Bachelor Programme (Bakalavriat) is the first stage of higher education. The duration of the study should not be less than four years, which is empowered to determine by State Compulsory Standard of Higher Education board. After completion of Bachelor programmes successfully individuals are awarded with the certificate of the academic degree of bachelor on which he/she can work for which higher education is required.

2. The person who has completed the Higher Education can get admission to the Master programmes and doctoral studies (Magistratura and Doctorantura). Besides this the holder of 'Bolashak' scholarships through full time study at leading international universities in line with the approved priority specialities can also accessed these two programmes. The Post Graduate military academies and colleges (adjunctura), implement the Higher Military Education.

3. Master Degree is based on the studies of bachelor studies with a Master programme in the two areas such as Scientific Pedagogic education with two years of study duration; profile with at least one year of study. Those who have defended his/her final dissertation, in the viva-voce publicly are awarded with the master degree in the concern discipline.

4. After the completion of Master Programme, an individual can get admission in to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) on selected disciplines. The duration of the study is minimum three years. The Resident, Master and Doctoral studies are comprised of Higher Medical and Pharmaceutical education. The duration of the Resident Programme is two to four years that depending upon its specialisation which encompasses comprehensive training in clinical speciality. Different types of tertiary educational institutions and higher educational institutions in Kazakhstan are national research universities, national higher education institutions, research universities, universities, academies or institutes. The conservatories, higher schools and higher colleges have a similar status. The various types of higher educational institutions are determined at the authorising stage and depend on the various programmes and orientation of the research work.

Equity and Effectiveness of Schooling:

Kazakhstan is investing considerable effort in improving the capacity of and learning conditions in its primary and secondary schools and in some respects education in Kazakhstan is more equitable than in OECD countries on average. Yet, many remains to be done to eliminate persisting inequalities in access to good quality schooling that are determined by factors such as school location, gender and language of instruction.

The policy interventions designed to address these issues benefit mostly those school that has the mandate nurture academic excellence. Students who struggle academically and under achieve are thereby largely left on their own. If Kazakhstan is to improve the quality of learning outcomes in its school, targeted and urgent action is needed to help under-achievers get back on track.

Kazakhstan has the ineffective secondary school. The system of secondary school in Kazakhstan is quite effective to convey the theoretical knowledge and make sure that students remember, recognise and retrieve information according to data provided by TIMSS and PISA. They are comparably weak at allowing students to acquire and practice higher order thinking skills, such as applying and reasoning in math, or reflecting on and check out texts when reading. Mostly academic and extensively broad secondary curriculum is a major disadvantage to the effectiveness of instruction (NUWG, 2015).

The government planned to introduce a 12th year of schooling to increase the effectiveness of learning and to recognise grade 11th to allow to get more in-depth instruction in the field of natural science and mathematics, social sciences and humanities and the technology. This is an ambitious endeavour. Its success will depend on the ability of Kazakhstan to purpose build a 12 year education model that retains the good features of the present system and avoids perpetuating its weaknesses. Capacity restraints, however, might render the establishment of good quality technology studies very difficult (ibid).

Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Teaching Quality:

The class teachers assess the students of primary and secondary school regularly in Kazakhstan as well as they also assess the students externally through External Assessment of Academic Achievement (EAAA) of a sample of 9th grade students and United National Test (UNT), a combined, standardise school leaving and university entry taken by almost all students at the end of 11th grade.

In its current form, it is clearly indicates that the class room assessment in the Kazakhstan is not providing the proper knowledge and the skill development of the student are not accomplished

successfully in the school. To assess and compare learning consequence in numerous subjects there are no different criteria and consequently, no one can give assurance that both students will be given same marks by different teachers in different school are performing at the same level. Appropriate methods of criteria based assessment can help overcome the disadvantages described above and are currently being developed and piloted in the so called Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (UNESCO, 2015).

The external assessment in place the EEEA and UNT, both have serious shortcomings which prevent them from achieving the full potentials that standardised testing has proven to have in other countries for monitoring students progress, identifying potential under achievers, and testing relevant knowledge and skills. The simple multiple choice format of the UNT and EEEA is well suited to knowledge questions, but it does feature the comprehension, application or analysis questions which students should also be asked if their higher order skills and university potential are to be properly assessed. It is suggested to improve the external assessment so that they can capture not only knowledge, but also the ability to apply knowledge and a wider range of thinking skills, and to introduce standardised national test at the end of each phase of education (ibid).

Teachers and School Leadership:

The teaching profession in Kazakhstan suffers from low status and prestige. In many OECD countries, teacher report feeling undervalued and there are similar concerns about the image and status of teaching (OECD, 2005). Also, the relative salaries of teachers in Kazakhstan are low and the salaries scheme is not favourable particularly to teachers in the first years of service. There is an inequitable distribution of teachers among the schools, with highly effective teachers being less likely to work in disadvantaged schools, but the people like to work with the students who are more advantage or gifted by nature, where additional school resources and support are available.

State Programme for Education and Development 2011-2020 (SPED) give top priority to address all these issues, and the implementation of reforms to that end is already underway.

Remuneration of teachers have been on the rise since 2009, strong financial incentives for acquiring higher level teaching qualification have been put in place and the SPED features ambitious benchmarks of achievements. This, however, just the beginning and success so far is fragile. The reform will depend on the extent to which the state authorities will succeed in motivating a critical mass of teachers in the system to benefit from the new possibilities and to endorse a new notion of professional excellence. Part of the problem is also the fact that Kazakhstan is still missing a rational system which link details professional standards that reflect a shared understanding of what is considered to be achieve teaching for different subjects and different level, with standard for the authentication of teachers education programmes, for regular authentication process and regular teachers evaluation, and for the improvement of precise professional development plans (OECD, 2014).

In comparisons, policies in support of school principals are considerably more limited despite an anticipated increase in responsibilities for principals in connection with the education reform. Policies should be put in place that ensures that the best people possible are recruited for job, that sufficient investment is made in rising the capacity of those already in the profession, and that professional development and growth are appropriately rewarded.

Education Expenditure and Financing Mechanisms:

Reforms are essential for improving education, but investment in the day-to-day operations of schools not less important if they are to absorb the new ideas and deliver according to new quality standards. In recent years spending on education in Kazakhstan has increased dramatically, but it is still below international average and the additional resources are allocated predominantly in favour of educational change. The school network is therefore remained underfunded and the wages of educational professionals are still well below the national average income of workers with similar level of qualification. The state authorities are called to increase spending on education and thereby strike a more healthy balance between investment in reforms and financing for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of school across the country.

The resource shortages are partially due to shortcomings in the financing mechanism for education, which at present fail to direct financial resources where they are most needed. The state authorities are well aware of these deficits and intend to address through the introduction of a per capita funding formula. This is a step in the right direction, yet the nationwide implementation of per capita funding will require better planning, and the inclusion of ungraded schools in the funding formula, further increase of education expenditure, and more realistic timing than is currently the case (<https://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Kazakhstan.pdf>).

Vocational Education and Training (VET):

The country's industry and economy desperately need the skilled and qualified labour that VET institutions exist to provide, yet before these institutions can fulfil their important mission, a number of problems needs to be addressed. The main challenge is not so much that the VET graduates in Kazakhstan lack skills, but, rather that the skills they possess when they emerge from the VET system are not the skills best suited to meeting employees' needs. Furthermore there is some mismatch between the occupation the highest numbers of students choose to pursue at VET schools and the occupations in greatest demand in labour market. Last but not least VET in Kazakhstan traditionally seen as a channel for young people who have not completed the compulsory education, who have been unsuccessful in general or higher education or who have dropped out (UNESCO, 2012).

Education in Kazakhstan: International Comparison

In the year 2009, Kazakhstan secured the top place on the UNESCO Education for All Development Index; it uses four out of six Education for All goals, which are universal primary education, quality education, adult literacy and gender. According to data from UNESCO Institute of Statistics for 2010, Kazakhstan has achieved universal primary education (99.0 percent) with a close to 100 percent progression rate to grade 5, universal adult literacy (99.6 percent) and high gender parity (99.3 percent). The level of education attainment of the population is high as well. One quarter of the adult population aged 25 and above has completed tertiary education, 30 percent hold a postsecondary degree and 40 percent have upper secondary

education. The share of adults with education at lower secondary level or below was only 3 percent in 2010. The educational attainment level of women is higher than that of men, 28 percent women attain tertiary education level compared to 23 percent of men; and 33 percent women obtained a postsecondary degree compared to 29 percent of men (UNESCO, 2014).

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

Women Literacy:

The literacy of population starting at the age of 15 is 99.5 percent as per the database of the 1999 census. There can be found an increasing trend with regards to the index for education, which was 0.927 in 1999 and reached to 0.944 in 2004. From the total population of 15 or over aged group, about 33.5 percent of women and 40.0 percent of men have access to general secondary education. On the other hand, 24.6 percent of women and 19.9 percent of men have a specialized education (UNICEF, 2013).

The representation of women in higher education constitutes 13.2 percent, while men occupied 12.0 percent. At the beginning of the year 2004-05, the combined enrolment rate including schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities of the population from the age of 6 to 24 was 74 percent. Out of this, the representation of women was 75 percent, where as for men it was 73 percent. Generally, the education system of Kazakhstan is dominated by female. With 80 percent, the secondary educational institutions were dominated by female-teachers, where as in preschool organizations representation of female teacher is almost 100 percent. There are 16 heads of Oblast education departments in Kazakhstan and out of which women's representation is 6 with 37.5 percent (ibid).

If; we talk about the involvement of female students at all levels of education (aged from 6 to 24) is 81.1 percent, while for male students, it is 70.9 percent. Without a general secondary education, the share of men is twice that of women. In the system of elementary education, women make up 99.8 percent of the employees as administrative assistant, seamstress, cook, hairdresser, etc. (ibid).

Education of Girls

Until the age of 16 or secondary school, education is mandatory and it is generally started from 6 years of age with elementary schooling. The government provides free and universal primary and secondary educations. According to law of the land, irrespective of gender, everyone has equal right to access education (website OECD-SIGI). The combined gross enrolment rate in education in the year 2006 was 91.8 percent. Out of which, female constitutes 88.5 percent, where as male represents 95.1 percent and parity between male and female is around 93 percent (UNDP, 2008).

The pre-school education in Kazakhstan has been neglected since its independence. Remarkably for a country in which a majority of women works full-time, less than half of all children aged four and five are enrolled (UIS, 2010). The government has included “improved pre-school education”, under Anti-Crisis plan, in the year 2009 (Republic of Kazakhstan 2009). Primary school has been started at age six, which runs from years 1 to 5. In 2007, the total net enrolment ratio in primary education was around 99.0 percent. A large progress has been achieved since 1991, when this rate was 86.7 percent. The girls’ enrolment ratio in 2007 was around 99.4 percent, which was even higher than boys with 98.6 percent and women to men parity was 101 percent. Some other indicator relating to advancement of primary education is the primary completion rate, by taking account of drop-outs rates. The primary completion rate in Kazakhstan was remarkably high with 99.5 percent in 2007. The rat of girls was even 100 percent, by surpassing boys’ rate with 99.1 percent. Once again the parity between women to men was about 101 percent (UIS, 2010).

As of 1999, the urban-rural and income disparities were remarkably small in Kazakhstan. The attendance rate in primary school were only 1.2 percent points lower for children living in rural areas over those from urban areas, and 1.3 percent points for children from the richest was higher from the poorest. There occurred only a marginal difference with regards to drop-outs, with a rate of 0.4 percent for urban, where as for rural children, it was 0.5 percent. Again, children from the richest were almost zero dropouts, on the other hand only 1.0 percent children dropout from the poorest section (UIS 2010).

In lower secondary schools, students continue from grade 5 to year 9. The higher secondary education in Kazakhstan comprises three tracks, such as general secondary school, covering grades 10 and 11; initial vocational education provided by training schools and lycees. After this there is secondary vocational education provided by colleges and trade schools. In 1990, parity between women to men in secondary education was 78 percent and in 2004 it reached to 97 percent, the proportion remains same in 2007. Between the year 2004 and 2007, the number of boys' enrolment fell by 11,000, due to cohorts. At the same time, the number of girls increased to 10,600. According to 1999 census data in secondary education disparities were much larger. In Kazakhstan, the rates of secondary school attendance were 5.3 percent points higher for children living in urban areas over students from rural areas. The attendance rate was even 12.2 percent points higher for children from the richest section as compared to poorest. One can find a notable difference with regards to drop-out rates, with a rate of 4 percent for urban children against 7.2 percent for rural children. Drop-out rates among 20 percent richest was around 3.3 percent, whereas from 20 percent poorest it was 8.9 percent (UIS, 2010). In Kazakhstan, the over-all, drop-out rates were in a very lowest position. The drop-out rates in Kazakhstan were neither affected by age of the child nor by mother's education (UNESCO, 2005).

Due to the introduction of tuition fees in tertiary education, income differences play a major role in subsequent education of the children. In 2002, among the 20 percent poorest of Kazakh population, only 16 percent adults between the ages 25-29 had completed university or college education. On the other hand, among 20 percent richest population 45 percent had completed the same (World Bank, 2004). In tertiary education, the enrolment of young female is higher than enrolment of young males. In 1999, women to men parity in tertiary education, was 115 percent and it rose to 144 percent in the year 2008 (World Bank WDI, 2011).

About 3.9 percent females in secondary education age had started the higher education in 1999, whereas in case of males it was 1.8 percent (UIS 2010). Kazakhstan had 26 institutions of tertiary education, universities and colleges, until the year 2009. Among them top two universities are al-farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty and Eurasian National University in Astana. Other universities of Kazakhstan have also earned a good reputation in terms of providing tertiary education.

Gender Issues in Education

The participation of individuals in development programs, especially in a long term basis, is dependent on their health and education. The health and educational status of women and men are also influenced by their economic status and infrastructure. To improve infrastructure in educational institution and health care, ADB provided financial assistance for water supply, sanitation, energy, and transport.

At the state level much attention has been paid to the issues of gender equality in Kazakhstan. According to the constitution of Kazakhstan “No one shall be subjected to any discrimination for reasons of origin, social, official and property positions, sex, race, nationality, language, attitude to religion, convictions, place of residence or any other circumstances.” Besides this the country also adopted the laws “On Marriage and Family”, “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women”, “On Prevention of Domestic Violence”. By the decree of the president of Kazakhstan in 1998, the National Commission for Women and Family Affairs was created to ensure the balance of opportunities between men and women. The Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan was adopted under Presidential Decree in the year 2005. From the perspective of socio-economic development, gender structure plays a pertinent role. There is slight increase in the population of both male and female in Kazakhstan. During the year 2011-13, male population growth was 234,065 people; whereas the growths of female population were 235,584 people. The proportion of female population was 51.8 percent, as compared to 48.2 percent of male population. In preschool and school age groups from 0 to 19 years the education system is dominated by female populations. From the age of 20, predominance of male population has started in Kazakhstan (MEC, Kazakhstan, 2016).

At the beginning of the academic year 2013-14, among students from 1-4 classes 48.9 percent are girls, whereas 51.1 percent are boys. This ratio was accounted by taking in to total girls’ and boys’ population of the corresponding age. Out of the total student population, in TVE 47.7 percent are women with 80 percent of them are studying full-time, 18.5 percent part-time and 1.5

percent studying in evening form. In higher education system, there are 57.7 percent students are women, as compared to 42.3 percent of men (ibid).

In access to primary and secondary education, as well as in literacy rates Kazakhstan is very close to gender parity. In 2007, to achieve education and literacy under MDG 3, the government set new targets, by focusing on quality of education (UNDP; MDGs in Kazakhstan). After basic comprehensive education (grade 9) gender-based differences in enrolment becomes apparent in Kazakhstan. It was found that, boys are much more likely to attend technical and vocational training institution; on the other hand girls are generally remains in general education. One can found more balanced enrolment in post-secondary education (college), but in higher education, majority of university students are women (UNDP, 2007).

The representation of women in master's degree is 64 percent in the academic year 2010–2011; where as 58 percent of them pursuing doctoral studies (Agency of Statistics). However, high levels academic success of women does not reflected in their professional achievements. The government is unable to correlates education of women with top-level and management posts to ensure higher salaries in the labour market. With this trends continue in Kazakhstan, may posed grave risk that female students will increasingly lose motivation to enter professional and higher education (World Bank, 2017).

Perhaps it is more significant to correlates education with employment, because these types of institutions, where women and men are educated are regarded as the fields of preparation for employment. In secondary and higher education, gender segregation can be visualised in Kazakhstan. As young men make their presence in technical and vocational schools, where as young women are likely to attend colleges and universities. As a result of this, they are also concentrated themselves in traditional female fields of study such as education, health care, and the services sector. On the other hand young men with a huge number are represented in technical subjects and connected with the sectors like hydrocarbon, transport, and energy industries.

We can find close relations between educational enrolment and the patterns of labour market segregation. With higher education and technical training, men predominate among those sectors that are experiencing growth. This trend may continue in future, if the government is unable to address the issues with necessary measures. Nevertheless, students who study information science and technology are slightly in a better position in many other technical fields.

One of the major priorities of Kazakhstan is to strengthen the limited number of free or affordable preschool facilities. This may help to access to both education and employment (UNESCO, 2011). The government of Kazakhstan has adopted the Balapan (Nestling) Program to Support Children from Pre-School Education for the year 2010–2014, which was a part of its Strategic Plan for the Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2020. After independence, almost half of all preschools were privatized, and many buildings of former preschools were leased or destroyed. As a result of which, in 2010, it was found that only 373,160 students (38.7 percent) of all preschool-aged were attending such schools, on the other side, more than 260,000 children were remains on waiting lists. The Balapan Program also raised its concern regarding regional disparities in availability of pre-schools. As for example, in 2010, almost 7,000 rural settlements (69 percent) had no preschools in Kazakhstan because their populations with preschool-aged were not enough to support the opening of new facilities (UNESCO, 2014).

Formation of Balapan Program indicates the acknowledgement of the importance of education of early childhood, combined with the more number of children. According to the respondents women are unable to resume formal employment after having their children because of unavailability of childcare centre. The women who want to resume her work, the Balapan program can play important role in supporting who want to return to work.

Gender structure of University Teachers

Only 25.6 percent women are working as university professors in Kazakhstan. Generally, in terms of gender there are no trends of difference in the education system of Kazakhstan. The international research of student's functional literacy for PISA was held in 2012, where 2391 girls and 2877 numbers of boys were participated. The result of the test tasks of international

exam is similar in mathematics. At the same time in comparison to boys of Kazakhstan the girls showed good result in science. Hence, the equality of gender in Kazakhstan indicates quantitative ratio of men and women along with their position in the society. In the sphere of politics and economy both Young women as well as men are actively get involved (Sabzalieva, 2016).

Promoting Quality Education to improve Status of Women

The Kazakhstan's educational reform as the post-Soviet Republics encompasses the process of de-Sovietization and de-Russification. The process of De-Sovietization includes the way nationalizing political systems, eliminate the symbols, political institutions, and social and political landscapes represents their political system and change them with political institutions, new national symbols, and social practices. The process of de-Sovietization henceforth safeguards what is claimed as national interest against the colony (Heyneman and Deyoung, 2004). Russian as the primary language of communication in the Republic as well as it shifted focus from Russian history to the history of Kazakhstan. Over the previous eight years many people of Kazakhstan had become socialized and Russified to the extent that in the mid 1990s only 50 percent of the population spoke the state language of Kazakh (Hann, 2007).

Education is one of the principal priorities in Kazakhstan's state policy. During the relatively short period since independence in 1991, the government has made considerable investments in improving access to quality education, achieving significant progress in universal basic education, gender equality in education, and adult literacy. In the 2012 PISA assessment, Kazakhstan moved upward ten positions in the OECD rankings, from 59th place to 49th place. In 2015, the primary education of Kazakhstan reached 99 percent attendance, for secondary education it was 100 percent, for general adult literacy it cover 99.6 percent, and 99.3 percent for gender equality (<https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en>).

Nevertheless, in the PISA 2012 evaluation a cross-regional comparison of educational achievement revealed low scores in rural schools, with scores in mathematics and reading 8-10 percent below the national average. Furthermore, on Kazakhstan's Unified National Test (UNT),

while students from urban schools scored 76.16 points, students from rural schools scored on average 66.50 points (ibid).

These eye-opening results from PISA and other assessments have pushed the government to initiate comprehensive programmes to provide unbiased and qualitative education in rural areas, as well as to give increased support to disadvantaged students with learning difficulties. In 2012, the country adopted a five-year National Action Plan to improve students' functional literacy skills, problem solving and encourage creative thinking, as well as make sure the eagerness of students for lifelong learning. In addition to adjusting the curriculum and management system, five particular measures have been taken to improve the quality of general school education as detailed below (OECD, 2014).

1. Expansion of the pre-school network

The government of Kazakhstan has made the expansion of pre-school education a priority. Between 2003 and the latest statistics from 2013, the network of pre-schools increased by over six times, to 8,143 facilities, primarily through the mechanism of public-private partnerships. Overall, pre-school education coverage has reached 81.6% of children aged 3-6 years old, and the new program for educational development for 2016-2019 aims at providing 100% coverage of preschool education.

2. Creation of regional hub-centres to support rural ungraded schools

A distinctive feature of the school network in Kazakhstan is the prevalence of small ungraded schools, accounting for almost half of all schools in Kazakhstan, including nearly 70 percent of rural schools. The provision of these mixed grade schools ensures that all Kazakh citizens even those in remote or under populated areas are guaranteed the right to free preschool, primary, basic secondary and general secondary education in accordance with the Constitution. In order to achieve higher learning standards in these schools, special hub-centres have been set up across the regions, with each hub-centre supporting the improvement of education quality in three to

four small ungraded schools. In 2015, there were 160 such hub centres operating across Kazakhstan.

3. A new system of teacher professional development

In partnership with the University of Cambridge in the UK, a new system of teacher professional development has started by Kazakhstan. The Basic level of the training program focuses on understanding learning processes in the classroom; the Intermediate level focuses on the whole school; and the advanced level focuses on guiding learning processes within a network of schools. After successful completion of each level of the training program, teachers are entitled to additional payments of 30 percent, 70 percent, and 100 percent of their previous salary, respectively.

4. Development of new mechanisms of school financing

Kazakhstan recently piloted a new model of school financing based on a per-pupil formula. This mechanism of funding raises the financial autonomy of schools in providing differentiated salaries and bonuses based on performance, thus contributing to more efficient use of resources to develop the overall quality of education. Boards of Trustees, composed of parents, sponsors, and school graduates, are also helping to enhance transparency and accountability at the school level. During pilot implementation of this funding approach, the share of teachers with the highest qualification increased from 60 percent to 79 percent and the average student score on the Unified National Test improved from 76 points to 80 points.

5. Investment in school infrastructure and technologies

The Ministry of Education and local governments have also made considerable efforts to equip schools with modern technologies and laboratory facilities, as part of an effort to upgrade school infrastructure. By 2015, around half of all schools had physics, biology, chemistry, and language laboratories, with two-thirds of the newly equipped schools located in rural areas. Kazakhstan

has also attached great importance to utilise the of information communications technology (ICT) in education. In 2010, the majority of schools were equipped with computer hardware and software, multimedia equipment, and interactive smart boards. Since the 2012-2013 academic years, Internet access is available in 98.8 percent of urban and 99.2 percent of rural schools, though not all with broadband technology. The State Program for Education Development sets a target of 80 percent of schools is being furnished with modern laboratories and 90 percent with broadband internet access, by 2020.

The Minister of Education and Science of Kazakhstan, Erlan Sagadiyev, has stated “education determines the fate of our children, and the level of education depends on both educators and parents”. The government of Kazakhstan plans to continue its partnership with parents around the country to provide the best possible education to the next generation.

6. Reforms to decrease gender gaps

The textbooks of secondary school was carried out which is based on gender evaluation. It disclosed a gender irregularity, which reproduced the consciousness of the children. Thus the children adopted the out dated stereotyped roles of boys and girls. On gender education teaching programs were created for pre-schools (6-7 years old), grades 1-4, and university students. In 2005, this will be developed for the 5 to 11 grades. The study guides for the teachers and students are being worked out.

The “Introduction to the Theory of Gender” was created with the aim of introducing gender sensitive approaches into the system of higher education, an educational and methodological course for students. Within the Kazakh State Women’s Pedagogical Institute a scientific and research institute of social and gender studies was established. A study guide was created by the Institution of “Fundamentals of Gender Education” in the Kazakh and Russian languages for the university students those who study pedagogical specialties, further developing gender indicators for the whole education system.

Within the framework of the National Program “Education for All” a project on gender education is being implemented with the support of UNESCO. At Al Farabi Kazakh National University, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Kazakh National Women’s Pedagogical Institute, and universities in Karaganda, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Uralsk, Taldy-Korgan, Semipalatinsk, and Kostanai, gender courses like Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy, History, Law, Social Work, and Philology are taught.

In the college curriculum, an optional course (10 academic hours) “Gender problems and the objectives of the Internal Affairs bodies” was introduced in the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Gender issues are covered in the courses “Operation and Investigation Activity” and “Criminal Law”. At the same time all conducted activities are not coordinated properly. There is still a need for a well thought out policy on gender and legal education of the population.

Gender Policy and Women’s Reality

All these reforms have produced visible outcomes for women empowerment. In the year 2012, The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index ranked Kazakhstan 14 out of 86 countries, in the year 2009 it secured third place out of 102 countries. In the year 2006 Kazakhstan government put an action to promote gender equality for the year 2006-2016 with having a goal of at least 30 percent women should occupy the role in the decision making process at all level of government by 2016. In 2009 the UNDP, estimated the country’s action plan for implementing the 2006-2016 gender strategy, called the country’s actions regarding gender issues “highly effective” and called Kazakhstan “one of the few countries in the world with the developed base of legal documents stating the strategic steps of the state for the development of gender equality in detail.” (OECD, 2012)

Kazakhstan’s president Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2009 charged the government with mainstream issues, including gender issues, into the nation’s Strategic Development Plan to 2020. According to the Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Abdykalykova “Our women have felt the support of the state from the first years of independence,” “The national commission [the National Commission for Women and the Family] was established in 1998 by presidential decree. We

were the first CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] country to create a mechanism for the implementation of state policy in the field of human rights protection and the legitimate interests of the family, women and children.” (Witte, 2017)

United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals including securing equal access to primary and secondary education for both boys and girls have already achieved by the Kazakhstan Government. Up to 2012, both women and men have the same school life expectancy, roughly a third more women than men were enrolled in tertiary education (colleges, universities, and other post-secondary education training institutes).

Nevertheless, passing a law in the legislation does not always change in the activities on the ground, the ground reality could be different, and the gender biasness may practice over there. Solovyova, who has recently been active and strongly critical of the government in addressing problems with the country’s distribution of affordable housing, suggests that the country’s new strategy, Kazakhstan 2050, could do more to promote the well-being of women, children and the elderly.

Women in Business

The Kazakhstan’s women are very much active members of its business community. The deputy Prime Minister Abdykalykova has reported at the national conference that, “Political and Economic Advancement of Women is the Path to Competitiveness,” in November 2013, 40 percent of GDP of the nation is contributed by women. Among them 66 percent women engaged in entrepreneurship and 52 percent women engaged in medium and small business. Those women who are involved in entrepreneurships are frequently engaged in family business or outside house work from their home. According to Solovyova (member of Kazakhstan’s Mazhilis) “Women of Kazakhstan are well educated, so they actively participate in small and medium sized business, which is regarded as family business by most men,” (Witte, 2017)

However, the businesses of the family are frequently measure to upper management positions in their own or other companies. According to Enterprise survey made by the Kazakhstan

government says that women occupy the 34.4 percent of country's business and 25 percent held in the top management positions in the 2009 (ibid).

Women in Government

In the two chamber of the Kazakhstan parliament has 154 seats among them 28 women were representing, the number of women representation increased double in between 2000-2012. The deputy Prime Minister Abdykalykova had reported that, in the lower house of the parliament the representation of women had reached up to 25.2 percent. In the local executive body women made up 25 percent and there were 260 female mayors (Akims) of urban, rural and village districts. Women held 15.8 percent ministerial position with the appointment of the Gulshara Abdykalykova as Deputy Prime Minister on Nov. 28, 2013 (Witte, 2013).

Women representation in the decision making process of Kazakhstan surpass the world average, it also exceed from the upper-middle income countries like China, Russia, and any other country in Central Asia. It only remains behind the European Union and North America as well as the aggregate of the 30 high-income Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. According to the official report of 2010 of Kazakhstan women secure 56 percent of all Civil Servants only 9.3 percent were politically appointed Civil Servants. Majority of them hold the administrative positions. The women of Kazakhstan playing developing roles and power, they are also very much familiar with modern glass ceiling, which to have to do more with tradition than legislation and opportunity (OECD, 2012).

Solovyova told to the one of the leading magazine EdgeKz, that there are numerous reasons that why there are few women who are in the high-ranking positions, and some of them had to do with the choice between family and career. "May be it is connected somehow with our mentality and traditions, which influence the role of woman in society and create certain stereotypes. Politics, however, was always a man's business where they do not want additional rivals. On top of this, it's men who decide whether to allow woman to go to politics or not" (<http://www.edgekz.com/steppe-sisters-kazakhstan-rising-women-politicians/>). She also added that the president's gender strategy is intended to counteract this.

Abdykalykova mentioned that “Women are willing and able to work in any field,” “They are ready to contribute to building a welfare society. But certain conditions have to be created in order to do business. The sooner our society overcomes stereotypes and takes into account women’s economic potential, the faster we will build the society we want” (ibid)

The Prospect of Women

Abdykalykova said “We never used to have a lot of women in government.” “Now they’ve taken responsibility for the most complicated spheres, such as healthcare, economic integration and social protection.” The important portfolio in the ministry of Kazakhstan like ministries of healthcare, economic integration and labour and social protection are all headed by women. Abdykalykova, mentioned that the government of Kazakhstan working to involve more and more numbers of women in the decision making body, including a new action plan taken by the government, in which larger number of women can take part in the decision making bodies up to 30 percent by 2016. “What is more important,” she says, “is that there is an understanding in society, an understanding by the most forward-thinking male leaders” (Witte, 2017).

“The changes have started and women are using the opportunities created [Nazarbayev],” Solovyova said. “Women in politics have proven that they are professionals, well educated, and can be laconic, hard-driving and competitive.” She urged to work continuously toward achieve the equality programs, rather than create artificial hurdle. The way forward, she said, is to not create artificial barriers and continue to work on equality programs. She said “Women’s participation in politics means finding a balance between the aggressive approach of men and a more weighted position” (ibid)

Of course there is debate, how to achieve this balance. According to Romanovskaya “I’m against artificially created equal representation of men and women in the institutions of government,” “If a woman is smart, she can try her strength in this field. But as a deputy of the Mazhilis, I can say that I feel enormous responsibility and pressure that not every woman will be able to bear. In any case, I do not support gender inequality, but overall efficiency, of the parliament, for

instance, or any other political institution. That does not depend on how many men and women are working there.” Solovyova had been working for the increase influence of public on the decision making process which develop local government among other things. Abdykalykova had been working in addition to the goal of the National Commission on Women’s Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy particularly, collecting best practices from working trips abroad. She will now supervise what is known as the social section of responsibilities as Deputy Prime Minister. To create the organisation like Eurasian Association of Mediators, Romanovskaya is working on that, such kinds of body is needed to in the Kazakhstan’s push for regional integration (<http://www.edgekz.com/steppe-sisters-kazakhstans-rising-womenpoliticians/>). Romanovskaya said “I have never regretted the fact that I have chosen this path,” “Our quality of life depends on us and it is in our power to do something to improve our lives” (ibid).

Challenges for Women in Education System

Gradually the development of democracy process can decline, if there will be given less importance to the issue of gender education in the society. The higher education does not guarantee the working prospects of the women specialists for professional work and career promotion. The rights of the men and women are not sufficiently fulfilled due to the low level of gender education among the larger section of the population of Kazakhstan. They could not take an opportunity to prevent the violation of their rights due to lack of awareness. There is lack of campaign on the importance of the gender education which decreases effect of the measures taken by the Kazakhstan government.

A major part of the society is unaware about the importance and necessity of the gender education and the establishment of the gender education. Due to lack of special legal knowledge restrict the awareness of the protection of rights of both men and women. It is the responsibility of the women to take care of all the domestic non paid works, because of this the women gets little time to boost their professional skill or encouraged further study. There is very little research which is conducted on gender education. There are hardly any textbooks or teaching

guides published on gender education for universities and there are also not available in the libraries.

Most teachers who are women and significant to improve learning outcomes, are low paid or overworked in Kazakhstan. In the Education sector salaries paid only 60 percent of the average national wage, which is the third lowest proportion in the region (for countries where data was available). Furthermore, when the wages of educational sector were about 63 percent, the ratio of the national wage of the salaries of the teacher got decreased since 1993. The teachers get incentive for the improving in the learning outcome of the students, with increasingly poor working conditions of the women with little in-service support and salaries that are declining in value. The major challenges with regard to quality are as follows (UNICEF, 2010):

- There is a lack of schools in Kazakhstan. Numerous schools are dilapidated in condition due to poor maintenance in the infrastructure of the soviet school. In addition to that still there are poor sanitation facilities which make the school more unsafe. The poor infrastructures of the school of the state create hindrances in connection to not only education but also quality of learning. The government now spending hefty amount of its resources on repairing the buildings of the school and learning materials.
- It is just only in the pen and paper mentioned that there is free and compulsory education to the students but in practice the parents bear a portion of the cost of schooling, through textbooks, supplies, school meals and, in some cases school maintenance.
- The monitoring and evaluation system of the country need to restructure so that, the concrete information can be available on the learning outcomes.
- In the remote area there is a scarcity of trained teachers and the trained teachers of the cities are reluctant to work.
- To update the curriculum and instructional material dated from soviet period is becoming a tough task.
- To maintain accountability and equality across school districts there is need to establish a concrete set of standard uniform.
- Though there are shortage of officials in the job market, thinking about the dropout from the job are seen as irrelevant.

For achieving the policy of gender equality contribution of gender education is very much essential at any level and in all spheres of society. To establish and enhance the cordial relationship between both men and women there is need to teach various courses on gender, which are based on equality, tolerance and respect the rights of individual's self determination and individuality. Gender education programmes are also supported by international organisations. Various Non Governmental Organisations also increasingly keen to take part in the activity on the area of gender education. Kazakhstan government has also taking some striking measures to lessen gender gap. An assessment of the Content of textbooks of secondary school was accomplished with regard to gender, the programmes and textbooks are prepared and they will be introduced in the education system in the near future. Women tend to have high levels of education. The institutions like Women's Pedagogical Institute (established in 2000), the Centre for Gender Education at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (renamed so in 2005) etc. established as a scientific and research Institute of Social and Gender Studies. At the various educational areas of social studies and the humanities NGO are working actively on gender education. The women are being given training in political science and economic advancement. Contacts are being established between the national, regional and international organizations, which are engaged in gender education and economic promotion of men and women.

Summary:

Education is an important instrument of social transformation. Education could contribute to economic betterment, which improves the social status of the people. In Kazakhstan the educational sector totally dominated by women. In the primary and secondary level most of the teachers are women. There exist a close parity between men and women in Kazakhstan in access to primary and secondary education, as well as in the literacy rates. To achieve its targets regarding education and literacy under MDG 3, the government set new targets in the year 2007. Mainly it is focusing on quality of education (UNDP, 2010). Though in the sphere of education women are dominated, it requires much more attention to promote them in political, economic and social sector. It is only the education, which could solve the aforesaid problems.

CHAPTER- 4

STATE POLICIES AND PROSPECTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Introduction

Empowerment of women has occupied paramount importance in 21st century. In any country where there is a high degree of gender equality, the level of economic growth is also high. The benefits and opportunities for women in a country determine the quality of life of the people of that country. Globally in the context of human resource development empowerment of women has become a major concern for every country. To promote gender equality and for the enhancement of women empowerment, the majority of the UN member states has adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the year 2000. Throughout the world women are struggling for their human rights and equal opportunities. But gradually positive changes could be found regarding the status and role of women in the society. There is reduction of their inequality and promotion of democratisation to provide equal opportunities for both men and women.

Gender problem is important and is linked to the development of gender disparities, infringes on the rights and possibilities of people who have barriers to any society's sustainable development. Gender problem is more important, because it is a problem which hinders the development of every sector of the economy. As Shakirova (2015) said, modern Kazakhstani society can be described as a complicated mixture of cultural and ideological features like Nomadic style of life, belonging to Turk language family, domination of Islam, Post-Soviet postcolonial mind, liberal democracy, market economy, Central-Asian regional leadership, Eurasian geopolitical ideology, etc.

The Government of Kazakhstan through its resolution- 1190 on 27th November, 2003 approved gender policy for the country. This gender policy has given clear directions on, “the achievement of balanced participation of men and women in the power structures, the provision of equal opportunities for women's economic independence, entrepreneurship and career development, creation of conditions for equal exercise of rights and responsibilities in a family and freedom from gender-based violence” (The Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2005).

In the last two to three decades the traditional power oriented domination of men over women has been drastically changed. Even though significant attitudinal changes have taken place in the male community, it is not up to the mark to comprehensively eradicate gender inequality. Particularly, since its independence Kazakhstan has achieved high level of progress in the protection of rights and legitimate interests of its citizens. In this context many researchers attempted to meticulously review the existing gender policy based on the present situation. Here we will try to identify to what extent education helps to change the gender policy of Kazakhstan in the present situation or not.

Historical Background of State Policies

During the period of October Revolution in 1917 a Marxist perception has already created in the society. In 1921, the Communist parties meeting in Moscow for the Third Congress of the Comintern (International Communist Organization founded by Lenin in 1919). In it they have adopted a program to eliminate sexual discrimination. “The program called for measures for the social equalization of men and women in law and everyday life, the radical restructuring of marriage and family law, the acknowledgement of motherhood as a social function, protection for mother hood and childhood, the introduction of provisions by society of care for children and young people and their training (day nurseries, Kindergartens), for the gradual elimination of domestic work (public kitchens and laundries) and finally a conscious, planned, cultural campaign against the ideology and traditions that results in the enslavement of women” (Patnaik, 1989). There are some other provisions has adopted in that congress including prohibition of women for night work, work in harmful industries, prohibition of child labor and overtime work (ibid.).

In 1920s, many of these provisions were included in the labor legislations of the Soviet Union. Changes also brought about in the marriage code from 1918, which continue till 1925-26. Lots of debates were held regarding the form of family arrangements and some of them give importance to utopianism. This gives importance to responsibilities of parents to care their children so that they men and women would develop the temper of equality. However, in 1927, the new marriage law has come in to existence. This went far ahead of the marriage law of 1918 and secularized marriage system. With this law attention was paid to employment of women and their socially productive activities. The age old traditional patriarchal family structure was

disintegrated and replaced by separate economic unit (Patnaik, 1989).

In economic sphere to improve the status of women many reforms, such as First Land and Water Reform, 1920-21; the Second Land and Water Reform, 1925-29 and the agricultural cooperation and collectivization since 1929 has initiated. Collectivization regarded as the highest form of agricultural cooperation. In it there was public ownership of means of production with collective form of labor. Collective farming dominated during the year 1930-40. At the end of First Five Year Plan in 1932, around 81.7 of the agricultural households were collectivized (Patnaik, 1996).

Women's participation has always given importance in Soviet theory and practice. As a result of which women has liberated themselves from subjugation of family. In the 1936 constitution of USSR, priorities have given to female employment and it was placed in the constitution as a right. This has made the foundation of primary source of sexual equality in the society. As a result of which, women got equal rights with man, in socio-political, economic, civil, and cultural sphere of life. This provides women's access with right to work, payment for labor, social insurance and education. It has also provisions to protect the interests of mother and child, assistance to single mothers and those with many children, got the maternity leave along with financial support to expectant mothers. Hence, with the guarantees of equal pay for equal work, the Soviet state protected women from economic exploitation, which was existed in the earlier systems (Patnaik, 1989).

Despite of all these measures, the problem has not entirely eradicated, rather it takes new forms under new circumstance. This may be due to many reasons. One of the major reasons is the cultural and demographic factors, which had an adverse effect on women labor force in Central Asia (Patnaik, 1989).

Gender Policy of Kazakhstan

The objective of any gender policy is working towards an organization which implements gender point of view as a focal point to frame its internal and external policy. The gender policy is featured by the truth that societal customs regarding men and women are broken and that both the sexes have equal access to power, authority and resources which is perceptible in the goals,

strategy, structure and culture of the organization. Gender policy can be framed on the gender analysis which includes: a) main goals; b) short term goals, detailed towards concrete results; c) measures to achieve those results; d) responsibilities; e) communication plan; f) budget; g) timetable; h) reportage and evaluation (Zenska-Mreza, 2016).

Right from its inception, Kazakh gender policy is strictly in the directional lines of the policy framework. Kazakhstan joined the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and ratified the Convention on the Political right of Women and the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women in the year 1998. Gender imbalance prevents the development of a society. Hence the experience of men and women needs to be considered in a balancing way. Limiting participation of women in the political sphere of the country, their removal from power at all levels will limit the efficiency of the state and its policy. Sustainable gender development is the creation of social infrastructures which promote dynamic economic growth, the formation of civil structures, creating conditions for personal expression of every human being, both men and women. The economic, political, educational resources should be distributed in a fair way and should be able to express their interests with their vital goals.

Since its independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has witnessed tremendous notable changes in every facet and sector of the economy. By following to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women in 1998, it acknowledged its commitment to advance the rights and interests of women. More than 60 international agreements and treaties on human rights have been ratified by Kazakhstan (Potluri, 2016). The gender policy adopted by Kazakhstan has been defined the following main directions:

- Achieving balanced participation of men and women in power
- Ensuring equal opportunities for women's economic independence
- Developing their own business;
- Career promotion
- Enabling equal rights and responsibilities in the family;
- Freedom from violence.

The strategy of gender equality for 2006-2016 developed in Kazakhstan provides solutions to achieve equal rights and opportunities for women and men. There are many problems of gender inequality prevailing in Kazakhstan. In real scenario, women have very fewer rights and opportunities than men. Various sociological surveys reveals that there are still gender inequality exist in Kazakhstan. In between the year 1990-2000, the rate of employment was very low and it has its adverse effect on the employment of women. They were migrated from paid labourer to unpaid household work and non-qualified or irregular work. Around 58 percent of women are unemployed in Kazakhstan and their wages constitutes 60.8 percent of total male's pay (Panorama, 2011). Women are basically earned very less in comparison to men. Even in present scenario they are employed in traditionally women dominated spheres like education, health, social protection etc.

Kazakhstan in the year 1998 ratified the 1979 UN "Convention on Abolishment of all types of Discrimination against Women". Following are the main ingredients of that convention:

- To elect and be elected in all publically elected organs;
- To take part in the formation of the state policy and be a state employee;
- To be a member of a non-governmental organization, working on the social and political problems of the country's life (Abikayeva, 2016).

Representation of women in the Parliament has decreased in 1999. It amounted to 11.2%, in 2007 9.5%, while in 2010 it was raised to 13.6%. The number of women in power is decreasing and it depends on the height of their position. In spite of the growth in the number of women as political civil servants (9.5% in 2000, 10.3% in 2007 and 9,4 %. in 2010), there are only four women ministers, 8 deputy ministers, three committee chairs, five deputy and only one district akims (mayor/governor). There are no women region and/or town akims. Women deputy district akims make up only 17 %. Women are not in demand on the labor market. Of all women who applied for jobs to the Employment Services, only every sixth has been placed. Among persons employed for hire 50% are women but their salaries constitutes only 60% of men's salaries. Women are engaged in low paid job seven in such sectors as healthcare and education. In 2011, women's salaries comprised between 85% - 84% of men's salaries. Women can bring to management a new set of criteria, change the traditional management style based on mutual

relations, consistence of actions and humanistic landmarks. The future of humanity depends on the level of women's education, their social status and health. To provide legal mechanisms of women's rights protection in Kazakhstan it is necessary to improve legislation, i.e.: a) Increase the number of women in bodies of authority b) create economic exemptions and preferences for women c) provide increased legal and social guarantees for women (Yanovskaya, 2016).

In present scenario, the representation of women in government and political bodies are very low. Women are not found at the top level (decision making level), rather they could be found in lower and middle levels of the gender biased pyramid of power. Although the proportion of women in Parliament in 2006 grew to 15.9% (17 women), the overall number of women there amounted to 12.7% in 2007 and 13.6% (21 women) in 2010. In the local administration the proportion of women in 2010 was 51%. Out of which, only 9.4% are political civil servants and 55.9% are working in the field of administration. Such distribution of employees in various structures of governance shows a low representation of women in politics. This is a barrier to a greater gender sensitive political participation and representation. The fundamental principles of gender equality, which is guaranteed by the constitution of Kazakhstan for equal rights and freedoms for men and women, are not backed up by guaranteed opportunities. In pursuance of the "Strategy of Gender Equality" the law "On Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men" was developed in Kazakhstan. By introducing quota system, it provides special measures for women to increase their representation at the decision making level (Potluri, 2016).

Following the path of developed democracies and in order to build up the political capacity of women who are party members, a system of quota (of not less than 30%) has been introduced for women nominated as candidates for election or for appointments for leadership positions. The sole purpose of this measure is to eliminate the discrimination of women in decision making process and promotion of the principle of gender equality. A special government body needs to be created to oversee due procedures and processes and take special measures to maintain equality. Improving the collection and analysis of statistical data of the state of gender equality is a priority in the implementation of gender equality principles in Kazakhstan. It ensures an effective monitoring of gender policy in the country. An enabling environment is being created in Kazakhstan for gender-sensitive budgeting at both national and local levels. The Social

(Gender) Budgets Project aims at capacity building of the national commission, civil servants, members of Parliament, women NPOs through the application of gender analysis. However, the full use of gender budgeting requires a political will which will ensure a sustainable application of gender approaches in budgeting. Women's personal development is understood as a condition of men's personal development since men's personal development is a prerequisite for women's growth and participation. The entire society will benefit as a result. A huge untapped potential of creative forces and capabilities will be involved which will shape up modern gender models. This will change the ratio of goals and priorities of gender policy (Abikayeva, 2016).

Constitutional provisions on Gender Equality

As per the Kazakh constitution, there is clause which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (ADB, 2013). The 'Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Men and Women' (known as the equal rights law), enacted in 2009 by the Kazakh government. This provides the legal principle of equal rights to their citizens. The equal rights law has defines the concepts of gender discrimination and determines the role of the state for safeguarding the interest of women in various spheres, including education, health care, civil service, labour market, and family welfare. According to this law all state agencies are responsible for the implementation of gender policies in their respective fields. But in practical we could found a better scenario. From gender perspective the adoption of this law is very much important, but it remains only in pen and papers. It does not have any legal basis for sex discrimination. Although women take recourse of the legal system to protect their rights in issues like family problems, employment, housing etc. still there have been no law that suits alleging sex discrimination in the republic of Kazakhstan (ADB, 2013).

The government of Kazakhstan has formulated numbers of policies for protection of equal rights since the completion of the previous country gender assessment. The President of Kazakhstan approved the gender equality strategy in the year 2005 (ADB, 2013). In the later periods the government has adopted various action plans for the implementation of the gender equality strategy for 2006– 2008, 2009–2011, and 2012–2016 (ADB, 2013). The major objective of this strategy is to shift the paradigm in which one sex is dominated to another. It gives importance to the “partnership and cooperation between both sexes” and in which women “participate equally

in all processes of social development, realizing their personal and human potential (ADB, 2013).” The action plan highlighted seven major areas regarding strengthening of gender equality. Those are in ‘the political and public sphere, gender education, the economy, gender-based violence, reproductive health, the family, and public awareness’. Each of the above area is required to achieve specific goals, by analysing of the current scenario with strategic objectives, and proper periodicals monitoring. In real scenario there was no monitoring results or application of the above action plan were found. According to an evaluation made by a group of NGOs the action plan has “purely formal in character” and particularly the local government seems to be inactive for the realisation of this action strategy (ADB, 2013).

The 2012-2016 action plans for the implementation of the gender equality strategy includes eight sections. This action plan gives importance to issues like ‘gender equality in politics and the economy, prevention of gender-based violence, and applying gender mainstreaming to official acts’ (ADB, 2013). It mostly highlighted the future development planning at grassroots level. This action plan visualised the principle of integration of gender with country’s strategic development plans at the oblast (region) level. For proper implementation of this policy there should be provisions of national and local budgets, with national statistical collections. To furnish microfinance for rural women and women’s entrepreneurship are the prime objective of this policy. Under this action plan majority of actions are unfunded, but it is expected that each government agency will take this matter in a responsible way in the coming future.

The National Human Rights Policy of Kazakhstan also addressed the gender issues. It was adopted in the national human rights action plan, 2009–2012. This action plan included various issues of women like labour, domestic violence, employment and pension security, the prevention of human trafficking and participation of women on decision making process (ADB, 2013). This action plan has no specific actions or targets and it remains only a descriptive document.

The government of Kazakhstan has introduced more gender equality legislation to empower women. This includes some temporary special measures with introduction of quotas, establishment of a government agency to implement gender-equality policies, requiring gender analyses of state programs and laws, addressing the issues of sexual harassment, and conceptualizing unpaid domestic work. However, despite Kazakhstan’s ratification of the United

Nations CEDAW, the aforesaid legislation did not get parliamentary support and hence could not become part of the law (ADB, 2013). In 2011 there have been discussions held on the possibility of amending the equal rights law and; a legal commentary on the law was also prepared. These initiatives may improve the status of women but, again it depends on its implementation.

National Machinery for Women's Affairs and Gender Equality

For the purpose of improving the status of women, the National Machinery for Women's Affairs in Kazakhstan was established shortly after independence. In present scenario it has expanded its mandate by promoting gender equality. By the decree of the president the National Commission for Women's Affairs and Family was created in 1998. The sole reason behind this was implementing the Beijing Platform for Action along with the development of the National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women. The commission was restructured and renamed in the year 2008. Now, it is known as the 'National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy'. It occupies high status and positions. The chairperson of the commission has directly responsible to the President. According to some gender advocates the renaming of the institution has visualise the traditional perspective, where woman's role is only confined to family affairs (UNECE, 2010). However, the mandate of the commission does play a defining role for formulating state policies regarding gender equality. It is one of the primary institutions for the realization of equality between women and men in Kazakhstan. The commission made the national development strategy and also has the task of implementing official gender equality policy in the context of Kazakhstan 2030 (ibid.).

In March, 2011 the commission organised the First Congress of Women in Kazakhstan. The event visualised some of the major achievement of government policy for women empowerment. By opening the Congress, President Nursultan Nazarbayev expresses the positive contributions of women in the growth and development of the country. At the same time, he also highlighted various challenges that women are facing. The president express their deep concern for women, regarding their high rate of unemployment, underrepresentation in senior government positions, and lack of social support for balancing formal employment with child care (Orazgaliyeva, 2016).

The commission regularly organised conferences, debates and discussions with various state agencies, as well as with NGOs and international organizations. The purpose is to attract greater donor with this institution. It has also extended its parallel structures to the regional level. All regions, including the cities of Astana and Almaty, have ‘Commissions for Women’s Affairs, Family, and Demographic Policy’. The office appointed various officers like the office of the akim (representative of the president and head of the akimat as the executive office of a municipal, district, or regional government).

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee in its recent review (2012) has found a positive trend regarding expansion of the commission’s powers. It also expressed its deep concern regarding lack of coordination between sufficient authority, decision-making power, financial and human resources to promote gender equality. The committee has put question mark with regards to the proper implementation of the Convention, with lacking coordination and cooperation between all other human rights and gender equality mechanisms at the national and regional levels (CEDAW, 2012).

Besides this there are many other institutions that play a prominent role in the promotion of gender equality in Kazakhstan. The ‘Commissioner for Human Rights’ (known as the national human rights ombudsman) and the ‘Human Rights Commission’ under the President, worked jointly with the commission. By taking account the complaints of women, the commissioner for human rights submits its annual reports to the Parliament on the state of women’s rights each year. Within the Social Council of the majority party in Parliament, Nur Otan (the People’s Democratic Party), a permanent commission on family policy and gender equality was established in 2008. The main objective of the commission is to “consider gender and women’s issues when approving national and regional budgets and exercise control over budget appropriations,” (ADB, 2013) and during drafting of Kazakhstan’s law on domestic violence, it provides legal expertise. The gender equality strategy aims at identification of major actors in “all government structures, who are responsible for the formation and implementation of state gender policy” (ADB, 2013). In 2010, it was officially reported that in all government bodies the staff members were responsible for implementation of gender policy (ADB, 2013). However, it is not clear, whether such personnel were officially acted as gender sensitive in mainstream

government offices or not. But at least it provides opportunities to various international agencies to work on such project.

Legal framework for Maternity protection and Childcare

The Republic of Kazakhstan ratified the ‘International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ in 2006. As a participant in the international legal regime of human rights protection established by this treaty, Kazakhstan is committed to ensuring “equal rights of men and women to exercise all economic, social and cultural rights”. Along with this, the republic of Kazakhstan ratified the UN ‘Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women’ in 1998 and it’s ‘Optional Protocol’ in 2001. Today, this convention represents a basic binding of international legal instrument to protect women’s rights, in the field of labour and employment. Furthermore, the Republic of Kazakhstan has already ratified the following conventions adopted by the ‘International Labour Organisation (ILO)’:

- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.111), ratified in 1999;
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100) ratified in 2001;
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No.183), ratified in 2012 and
- Workers with Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No.156), ratified in 2013.

The major national law of Kazakhstan regulating the rights of persons with family responsibilities in the sphere of labour is ‘the Labour Code’, dated May 15, 2007. This law declares the prohibition of gender discrimination (Article 4 in relation to Paragraph 2 of Article 7) and under this law, women and other persons with family responsibilities receive improved social and legal protection (ILO, 2014). Also, the Labour Code includes a number of special provisions for workers with family responsibilities regarding their working conditions. In addition to that, maternity benefits and childcare benefits during an annual paid parental leave for working women in Kazakhstan are regulated by Law No. 405-II; “On Mandatory Social Insurance”, dated April 25, 2003. According to Law No. 63-III “On State Benefits to Families

Having Children”, dated June 28, 2005; state provided fund for social support to persons with family responsibilities (ILO, 2014).

Moreover, on December 8, 2009, Kazakhstan adopted Law No. 223–4 “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women” (ILO, 2014). The provisions of this law are of a general in nature. In this report, the benefits, allowances and grants related to maternity and childcare are described.

Laws against Domestic Violence

Domestic violence and women trafficking are the major problems that are faced by Kazakh women. The law of the land also criminalizes rape. There are provisions of punishment for rape, including the spousal rape. It ranged from three to 15 years’ imprisonment. As domestic violence, remains a significant problem, on December 7, 2009, the president signed a new law on domestic violence and placed before the parliament in the year 2007. For the first time the law defines “domestic violence” and “victim”. It also identifies various types of violence including physical, psychological, economic and sexual. The law highlighted the role of local and national governments and NGOs in providing support to the victim of domestic violence. The criminal procedure code of the republic of Kazakhstan has sets the maximum sentence for spousal assault with 10 years in prison. It is the same as for any kind of beating.

The official statistics were very small and out of four families, one family experienced domestic violence. In such a situation police tend to consider such violence as a family matter and intervene only if the life of the victim is in danger. According to NGO estimates only 10 to 30% of domestic violence cases are investigated by the police. NGOs also reveal that, the uncertainty of economic conditions of women often forced them to drop their charges. The Kazakh government reveals that there were 25 crisis centres in the country, which providing assistance to women. Two centres also provided assistance to men; and six centres provided shelter for victims of violence (MDG 3, 2010).

Laws on Sexual Harassment and Human Trafficking

Another major problem for women in Kazakhstan is sexual harassment. To some extent the new law able to check some forms of sexual harassment, but this legislation considered as inadequate to solve the problem. There were reports on sexual harassment, but it lacks legal prosecution. Reports from the observers found that, women in rural areas faced much more discrimination than urban women. They were suffered from incidence like domestic violence, limited education and employment opportunities. They were also have limited access to communication and information, and discrimination in regards to land and property rights (OECD-SIGI; US Dept of State 2009, 2010).

The Kazakh law prohibits all kind of trafficking in persons for all purposes, but in reality the problem still exist in society. Kazakhstan was an important source, transit rout, and destination country for victims of trafficking during 2008 and 2009. There is also existence of internal trafficking. For the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour peoples were trafficked to countries like United Arab Emirates, Israel, Turkey, Russia, South Korea, Greece, and Western Europe. Girls and young women in their teen age and twenties were in central target for sexual exploitation. Regardless of gender, adolescents in orphanages, and peoples from rural and economically backward regions were particularly in vulnerable situation. The government has adopted a new national plan to combat trafficking in persons for 2010-2011 in April 2, 2009. Trafficking is a punishable offence and it has a maximum seven-year prison term. If the accused is a minor, the maximum penalty increased to 12 years' imprisonment. The number of successful prosecutions for trafficking continued to increase in 2009. According to NGOs report this is the outcome of improved cooperation between government officials in providing assistance for trafficking victims. As per the reports from the Ministry of Education and Science all high schools and colleges curriculum included trafficking awareness course (US Dept of State 2009, 2010).

According to 2008, Gender Gap Index of World Economic Forum the ranking of Kazakhstan is 45 out of 130 countries. It takes various aspect of the society. Among the yardsticks that are used, the country scores higher rank in no. 18, which concerned with the economic opportunity

and participation of women. It occupies no. 40 in attainment of educational, and no. 38 for health and survival. However, in political empowerment the country ranked very low position with 101st spot. Kazakhstan took a middle position in the upper middle income group of countries of the world (Hausmann et al 2008). One of the major achievements for Kazakhstan is that in 2008, the SIGI Gender Equality and Social Institutions Index ranked Kazakhstan third out of 102 countries (website OECD-SIGI).

Other State Action for Gender Equality

In the context of gender parity in access to primary and secondary education, along with literacy rates Kazakhstan occupied high positions. To achieve the target under Millennium Development Goal 3, it gives much more importance to education and literacy rates of women to promote gender equality and women empowerment. In 2007 new targets were set to increase the representation of women in legislative and executive bodies. The target also gives importance to issues like wage gaps and violence against women. However progress towards achievement of these new targets to some extent has been uneven. Women represent only 4 percent in the national legislature of members of the Senate and 22 percent of members of the *Mazhilis* (lower house of parliament). Women constitute 17 percent of deputies of *Maslihats* (regional legislatures). Around 58 percent of women are civil servants but only 9 percent of them able to occupied high level positions in central executive offices (UNDP, 2010).

With the gradual passage of time the economic activity of both sexes has been increasing, but the employment of women still remains less than men. The unemployment rates of women are higher than men with variation from region to region. Kazakh women occupied around two-thirds of the officially registered unemployed in the year 2009. In some of the regions, it rose up to 70 percent officially. The average earnings of women are only 63% of men's earning. So, there is a persistent segregation of women in the labour market of Kazakhstan (ADB, 2016).

A new initiative has been taken by Kazakhstan for equality of opportunity for both women and men. It has come with a new national strategic approach by naming the "Concept for Family and Gender Policy in Kazakhstan until 2030". In February 10, 2017 the new approach and a

coordinating action plan was discussed in Astana at the national forum naming “Empowerment of women in the corporate sector”. Members of various government agencies like the secretary of state, ministers of government, representatives of international organisations, including the EBRD, has participated in the forum. The discussion mainly focused on enhancement of women’s economic opportunities and their potential at working place.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Director for Kazakhstan Janet Heckman observed, “The government and businesses in Kazakhstan agree with us that a modern economy is impossible without fully utilising the talent and potential of both men and women. I am delighted that the EBRD’s Women in Business programme of financing and advice has government support as part of our innovative Enhanced Partnership Framework Arrangement ” (Pyarkalo, 2017)

In 2015, Kazakhstan joined the United Nation’s ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ which traced the importance of equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. It will be binding in international sustainable development trends and country’s existing programmes. In 2016, the President Nursultan Nazarbayev gave his assent to the new approach. As per this approach the government is committed to improve the legislation in the field of family and gender policy by November 2018. The new action plan traced the importance of removing obstacles in the path of female employment and career growth (ibid.).

The chief Social Counsellor of EBRD Michaela Bergman said, “The new approach was created and developed by the Kazakh authorities in very close coordination and with the support of the EBRD and UNDP. I am proud to see the role the Bank’s experience has played in the process of the country’s national gender planning so as to strengthen and improve women’s access to economic opportunities” (Pyarkalo, 2017)

Evaluation of Laws, Policy, and Prospect of Women Empowerment

While gender equality broadly prevails in the Kazakhstan society, yet they are unable to implement the gender strategy and law properly. Women’s Central Statics Office shows that the problem like inequality, unemployment and domestic violence among the life of rural women and urban women is perpetual (ADB, 2016). The president has declared distinct goals such as

raising the proportion of women in the decision making position and develop the women's employment etc. The government has launched such programs which will improve the lives of women, such as increase of day-care programs and targets for the formation of nursery by 2020. Nevertheless, many other large-scale projects which aimed at development of employment opportunities and infrastructure will prevail gender neutrality in their approach. In spite of that due to some pitfall in the prevailing law target were not accomplished (ibid.).

Discriminatory Family Code

In the year 2011 Kazakhstan has introduced a new Law on Marriage and Family. The minimum age of marriage for both men and women is 18 years, nevertheless, a civil registry office can minimise the age of marriage up to two years in some cases like pregnancy or if child has already born to the couple with the approval of the parents or guardians of the concern spouses. In the state registry office religious marriages have no legal validity only contracted marriage is legally recognised in the country (Hays, 2016).

United Nations population Fund (UNFPA) on its research found that growing the number of unregistered marriage of girls under the age of 18 years among some ethnic groups and in the rural part of the Kazakhstan. In such cases the marriages become just a formalised ceremony, which do not have legal sanction and rights of the brides are in grave danger. On the report of the interviewed done by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to the child spouses, they reported that they are mostly married due to forceful married, without their interSest even they are forced through physical, sexual and labour exploitation (UNHCR, 2003).

Civil law solely governs to the parental authority, under which both men and women have equal rights. Both men and women have equal right over their children, and married couple have equal rights within their marriage. Therefore both men and can be considered as the head of the family. Theory says that both men and women are equal but in practice women are always inferior to both husband as well as parents-in-law, according to the research done by the UNFPA and USAID. This clearly indicates that they have command on the decision making over the children. The court will take decision by keeping on the eye of the best suited interest of the child (for

example, regarding where child will live) if the parents are not agreed in case of divorce between the spouse (ibid.).

Under the Civil Code of Kazakhstan, the women have equal legacy rights as wives as well as daughters. Legacy is regulate mainly by Civil Law, customary and religious laws which not perceived as valid source of law under the constitution, regarding legacy or any other matter. Now there are no more information regarding the practice of legacy implementation are found. Both men and women have equal right to initiate divorce. The absent parents will have to provide the financial support in case where divorce couple have a child of less than 3 years of age or in case of disabled (Mertus, 1998).

Restricted Physical Integrity

At the end of year 2009 the law on Prevention of Domestic Violence was adopted. Categorically the law does not criminalise domestic violence, nevertheless, it allow for the use of ‘administrative detention’ in case of violation of a restraining order. Sometimes the domestic violence is also prosecuted as criminal offence according to the report of 2012 prepared by the US Department of States Human Rights (<https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrr>). The Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence includes an extensive definition on domestic violence which surrounding physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence.

The court can made an order of prevention against criminals between three months and one year, under the law of Prevention of Domestic Violence and amendment made to the code of administrative procedure. Administrative detention can be a result of an order of prevention with disagreement and criminals can also keep in emergency administrative detention up to 48 hours whenever a court decide whether or not to issue an order of restrain. The penalties of three months or three years can be prosecuted as criminal aggression in case of domestic violence, but if there will have serious cases it can be up to ten years of imprisonment (UNICEF, 1999).

The implementation of the law on Prevention of Domestic Violence includes references to an extensive mechanism is the responsibilities of the court, police, local authorities, healthcare

providers, crisis centres, and social care providers. Nevertheless, in practice the women of rural areas are used to prefer to stay with their husband after getting married.

The women of Kazakhstan faced many discrimination and inequalities both at home and their work place, in spite of having various legal agreement, policies and law. Women rights have some shorts of relationship with the development of the nation, including female unemployment, education, urbanisation, and mortality rates. It is worth mentioning to highlight the impact of culture and history of the nature of marriages in Kazakhstan.

The expert from the UN says that after the issues like threat to peace and the environment the gender issues are the most important issue, and both peace and environment are closely associated with gender. It is possible to address the issues of equality, non discrimination and tolerance may inevitably lead to the development of the state by improving the role of women in the society. Women are still facing the discrimination and inequalities in the home as well as at the work place in Kazakhstan in spite of various agreements and sanction of internationally accepted forum such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights (ratified on the 25th of June 1993), European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Certain steps have been taken by the Kazakhstan government to address the gender equality. For instance, in the year 1998 Kazakhstan government sanction the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), where discrimination is defined as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" (Kapysheva, 2014). If women are secured, the birth rate also can increase and the child mortality rate can also decrease, which may rise to overall population. Moreover, demographic issues are linked with the gender problems.

In the year 2000 the country ratified the “Concept of state demographic policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan”. The policy tries to conjoin demographic problems with national security. It also conveys its deep concern regarding slow increasing population and adopted the model "Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy: a new political course of a successful country". Kazakhstan has already witnessed the positive outcomes of the “Program of demographic development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period of 2001 - 2005”. There is sharp decline in the sexually transmitted diseases among the youth population of Kazakhstan (Kapysheva, 2014). On such a vast territory obviously there is need to increase 16.9 million peoples. Hence, in Kazakhstan gender problems are interlinked with demographic goal of a increasing the number of population.

Women’s role in the Political Life

In the political sphere after independence for a period of ten years, the situation has not significantly changed. The rate of women employment in 2001 was 55.2 percent and in 2011 it grows up to 56.6 percent (Kazakhstan Statistics Agency, 2012). One aspect is worth noting here is that, women were employed in profession like teachers and doctors, which are historically dominated by them. To understand the real situation of women in political life, one has to analyse their number in the leading and administrative positions. In 2011, it was 9.5 percent. In 2001, 9.6 percent of women were occupying leading government positions. From the above date it is clear that the political conditions of women remains the same during last decade. Due to the expanding party list policy seats for women, number of women in the Majilis (lower chamber of the Parliament) has improved dramatically. The results of past elections indicate that participation of women to be as Majilis deputies raised from 10.4 percent to 17.8 percent. In 2012 with huge improvement it increased to 24.3 percent. However despite of this, in the Senate, which is a higher chamber of the Parliament, the situation is not much appreciable. As of January 2012, the strength of women in Senate is only 4.3 percent with two women as Senators (ADB, 2013).

There could be much reason for lower political engagement of women. Firstly, the lower women representation in Senate may be due to cultural stereotypes, according to which men should work and their wives should confine to rearing of children and house hold activities. By which very less

women can be elected to a high ranking position. The second reason may be due to deliberate unwillingness of women to take part in politics, and the situation of conflict between career and family with mostly preferring the latter. There is requirement of much time and strong emotional self-control to working as a Chairperson in the Senate and sometimes women take a decision emotionally.

Status of Women in the Society as a Whole

In the Republic of Kazakhstan the status of women were undermined persistently. Most of the societal problem starts from the society. To improve the quality of life regarding any issues of the whole population the government should address and examines the problems that families are facing. As per the “Marriage and Family Law” from December 26, 2011 a marriage will get legal recognition only if it has registered at the official Registry Office. It means the traditional religious or ritual ways of marriage could not have legal validation. This system may highlight the problem of young women across the country. In the rural regions peoples were did not cares the local administration for marriage registration and believes Registry Office requires lot of effort and time. They bestow their faith in ritual marriage where, the couple is regarded as married, but could not get official recognitions. Dariga Nazarbayeva, the Deputy of the Majilis has addressed this issue on the meeting of the Nur Otan party. She said “The religious ceremonies are quite common now and society does not have one straight attitude towards them. Indeed, it is necessary to raise this point” (Hays 2016).

Bride kidnapping is another historical tradition that remains in Kazakh society nowadays and it is very difficult to determine. All this occurred due to solving of family related issues among themselves without engaging the police. According to the NGO naming “Women’s Creative Initiative League”, which was established in 1994, around 60 percent of women have experienced underage bride kidnapping (Hays, 2016). This is an alarming statistic, and it forced parents to push their daughters to get married as early as possible. In Kazakh society young woman were kidnapped and forcefully marry a man whom she did not know. The interesting aspect is that, the parents of the suffering girl did not prevent this situation; rather they supported the groom’s actions (Kapysheva, 2014). However some families, report the forcible abduction of

daughters in police. There is a provision for 7 to 12 years imprisonment according to the ‘Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Article 125 from the 16th of June, 1997)’ (ibid.). By analysing the above aspects it is cleared that the Kazakh society is still dominated by traditional roots. The situation is more pronounced in southern part of Kazakhstan with grave traditional customs.

With regards to marriage and divorce another important concern is the failure to pay alimony to ex-spouses. Along with the increasing rate of divorces there also occurred a problem for children either with one or no parent. Due to the imbalance between men and women, the society is disturbed and, this may result, with suffering of children. Alimony refers to the money paid by a spouse to support the living of his or her underage children. The ‘Marriage and Family Law’ which was adopted in 1998 gives a detailed description about the procedures of alimony collection including the consequences of disobeying the law. Despite of having the penal legislation, there are many instances where ex-spouses ignore their duty of providing alimony for their underage child or children. An NGOs “Union of Crisis Centres of Kazakhstan (Amansauylyk) along with the ‘Public Prosecutor’s Office’ in Almaty organized a monthly study from 1-29th of February, 2012. It analysed the ways of protecting children’s right and calculates the defaulters of alimony (Kapysheva, 2014). According to their statistics there has been a 25 percent increase in the number of person who fails to provide alimony within a period of one year. The sum total of indebted money is around 829 000 USD (ibid.).

Various scholars tried to understand the reason behind the inability of person to provide alimony. It may be due to the insufficient financial status or unemployment. But, in reality it was generally the results of ignorance of human towards someone’s duties. According to the NGOs, out of 154 single mothers, whose children were left without alimony, only 8 women were unemployed. Again, there were 34 ex-husbands who belong to state-employees and a few were in high-ranking officials with a fixed income (Mertus, 1998).

In the path of state action a major hurdle is that judicial officials may not know the place of residence of alimony defaulters. If the judiciary failed to determine their location, the children are left without justice (financial assistance). This does not mean that the state completely

ignores the situation. In the year 2014, analysing the issue of alimony defaulters, by addressing the nation president, Nursultan Nazarbayev said that “The State should support the single mothers and toughen the punishment for non payment of alimony” (Hays, 2016). In governmental sphere on September 14, 2012, the amount of payment for alimony has significantly decreased from 26000 to 4000 tenge per month (Kapysheva, 2014). Such a dramatic change was occurred due to replacement of the initial amount of income from which the alimony should be calculated. Prior to this, alimony was calculated on the basis of mean income of the region from where the defaulter belongs. As for instance, in January, 2013, according to the ‘Statistics Agency’ of Kazakhstan, the average monthly income, was around 100 000 tenge per month, on that basis the amount of alimony would be 26 000 (ibid.). Here, the members of the Parliament have taken the minimal wage as a determinant of the amount of alimony and it was around 18 000 in 2012 [ibid]. As a result of which the number of members of the Parliament as well as NGO activists displays their dissatisfaction. The head of the “Ulagatty zhanuya” (“Happy family”- an NGO) Marianna Gurina, has argues that 4000 tenge is not enough to support a child. This policy could increase the number of orphans because of the inability of a parent to fulfil all the needs with such a low assistance in comparison to other parent (Kapysheva, 2014). Although, the government has taken certain steps to tackle the problem of paying alimony; but in practicality the results is not much praise worthy.

At the beginning of 2014 the government rewrote the law again and changed it that the determinant income is the average wage as it was before. This way after the amendments of the Marriage and Family Code from the 14th of January, 2014, new minimum alimony amount is 27160 tenge. Interestingly in two years the policies have been changed back and forth. At the first sight the amount is even higher than in 2012. However this is not a case at all because of the recent devaluation of tenge by almost 20 percent which is already impacting the prices of products. It has been reported that the inflation in food prices has already reached 20 percent in some regions of the country (Hays, 2016). It means that the amount of alimony in 2012 compared to the one in 2014 is in fact even higher by 28.5 percent. However, a question may strikes in the mind of everyone, that how the process of approval took place that lead to a decision where members of parliament were not satisfied. In such a juncture the following questions may arise: “why was such a radical change adopted?” “How did the process take

place?” It is known to everyone that much amount is required to spend in order to make an amendment in the laws. Hence, another question may appear is that: “Can it all happen because of the circulation of money, when individuals push the change of a law back and forth?” From none of the perspective in any circumstances, the required consequence that is the well-being of children is not fully achieved. Hence, it can be said that the government has failed to address this issue.

With the uncertainty about the implementation, many propositions are frequently drawn. For instance, there has been a suggestion to create a state fund for the payment of alimony. Zulfiya Baisakova, the head of the NGO “Union of Crisis Centers of Kazakhstan” believes that on a regular basis this fund will pay alimony to children, but the defaulters will still required to pay the necessary amount back to the fund (Kapysheva, 2014). Berik Imashev, the Minister of Justice of the republic of Kazakhstan has already expressed his support towards this idea with adding some more thoughts about how the process of alimony could be improved in a better way (ibid.). He also suggests that, there should be prevention of defaulter from employment until receiving the full payment of debt and making community service compulsory for them. Lots of Member of Parliament including Yekaterina Nikitinskaya, Vladislav Kosarev, (members of the Majilis) as well as Vladimir Bobrov, (member of the Senate), are extend their dissatisfaction regarding the changes the previous Parliament has adopted. According to Nikitinskaya, “4000 tenge is not enough even to buy diapers for children. Having this law makes them trapped in the cycle of poverty” (Kapysheva, 2014). She also believes that such a rotation in the policy, is might be due to politicians’ desire to create a formal and imaginary improvement in the statistics of alimony defaulters and it is totally unacceptable in the social policy of a state.

The constitution of the republic of Kazakhstan has provided full gender equality among the peoples, but still there are hundreds of jobs prohibited for Kazakh women. This issue is much higher especially in highly paid heavy industries where modern technologies are in use. The socio-cultural factor forced women to a more difficult situation than men. It becomes very much difficult for women to get a credit because many of them do not have assets to mortgage. As compared to men the unemployment rate is higher among women. Women are facing concealed discrimination at the places of employment. The higher poverty levels among women as

compared with men also a factor which played a major role at the time of employment. Women bear the majority of the burden of non-paid household work. They can contribute very less time for their self education, career or raising their professional skills. The non paid household work including taking care of children of women still does not get social recognition from economic perspective. In budgetary process also less attention paid to gender issues. The process of women empowerment is also influenced by lacks of gender analysis and indicators. This could help in the process of the implementation of the gender policy in the economic sphere.

In Kazakhstan there exists formal occupational labour market segregation. Women were representing over 70 percent of total employees in traditional spheres, such as education and health care. There is also a high proportional female representation in the sectors like financial services, food services, the hospitality industry, and insurance. The industrial sector is dominated by men with engagement of over three-quarters of employees in mining, transport, storage, and construction. Almost two-thirds of workers are working in the sector of electricity and gas supply, waste management and water supply. Men are representing in those sectors which are highly profitable and highest-paying jobs. Industry contributes 36 percent of GDP and mining for 22 percent. On the other hand, education contributes only 3.4 percent, and the contribution of health care and social services is 2 percent (ADB, 2013). In education and health sectors which are dominated by women, are paid through the state budget. As a results of which women get very low salaries and fewer opportunities for advancement of their career. Around 27.4 percent of women were working in agricultural sector in 2010, and it is consistently declining since 2002 with 34.7 percent (ADB, 2013).

The EBRD (2010) Life in Transition Survey reveals that majority of Kazakh population still think that women should confined to household activities even if her husband is not working. Despite of this, the citizens of Kazakhstan still believe in women's business potential and want to educate their daughters more than the past average (ibid.).

To conclude, it can be said that the adopted policies and programs are not successful in Kazakhstan. Despite of the fact that new steps are taking place in order to improve the situation with alimony defaulters, the result is not much proved be effective. Those individuals, who fail to pay the alimony for the wellbeing of their children, must understand the responsibility. The

names of defaulters should be made public by hanging them on the main square of the city offered by a public prosecutor in Aktau (city in the West of Kazakhstan) (Mertus, 1998). Despite of this, there were no actions taken by the government, which could give an impression that the government is not much serious about the issue.

Summary

Kazakhstan's gender policy confidently achieved optimistic results since its inception develops with a perfect blend of international experiences and the national features. The President also reiterated the significance of women participation in decision-making and traced the importance of women's participation in production, particularly at new enterprises, which could help them to occupy large political posts gradually. In 'World Economic Forum' in the year 2010, it was noted that in the rating of gender equality, Kazakhstan occupied an honorable 41 place among 135 states. It was ahead of 14 states of the European Union on this indicator (CA-New, 2011). Based on the recent developments in Kazakh society, it can be said that gender policy requires some up gradations, by which women community could get an opportunity to promote their lifestyles. At the same time other shortcomings are needs to solve.

CHAPTER- 5

CONCLUSION

In pre-Soviet Kazakhstan, the society was not uniformly structured. Men had complete dominance over women in each and every aspect of socio-economic and political life. In this period their social life was regulated by Islamic law 'Sharia'. The society was highly patriarchal and marriage occurred between minors. Women were required to wear veil, where the whole body had to be covered up by black clothes. Girls were brought to home by paying 'Kalym' (bride price) and treated like slave, not only by her husband, but also his entire relatives. After the death of her husband, women were forcibly married to elder or younger brother of deceased husband.

After the October Revolution in 1917, the Soviet power was established in Kazakhstan. They initiated a number of policies for the emancipation of women. Prior to the Bolshevik revolution, jadidism was preparing the background for women's emancipation. During the Soviet periods women's cooperatives were organised. After centuries of bondage, the Kazakh women were able to make their claim for social equality with men. They became aware of their natural rights, which had been denied earlier to them in all spheres of life. They were also freed from patriarchy, ignorance, sub-ordination and they discarded their veils. Soviet system provided them a social, juridical and economic base for the emancipation of women in Kazakhstan. Women were inducted in to the sphere of social production with the elimination of feudal patriarchal relations. The standard of living of women was continuously rising since then. Efforts were made to minimize the wage gap between male and female. Soviet period created the basis for women to claim their social equality and the socialist state deserves lot of credit for the present situation of women in Kazakhstan. The patriarchal family structure was demolished by the Soviets. Mixed marriages, divorce, nuclear families etc. were gradually increasing in Kazakh society. At the end of 1970s, about two-fifths of the rural families were of modern urbanized size with minimum number of children. In the mid- 1990s, Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of perestroika brought some relief to women by initiating a number of reforms, but it was unable to solve all the women's problem. Despite measures taken by the Soviet state, still a number of women are outside the social production.

After independence, the social condition of women could not alter much, but some changes have come. During this period following independence domestic violence was rampant in Kazakhstan. They were physically abused by the male members. A great irony during this period is that a large number of people support perpetration of violence and blame women for it. Another major problem during this period is the sex trafficking. Women are imported as well as exported to foreign countries for trafficking. It is also found that numbers of government officials are involved in this business. Prostitution is another important social evil in Kazakhstan today. This problem is in grave situation especially in border areas. This has a close relation with seasonal migration.

Prior to Soviet period the Kazakh economy was based on nomadic pastoralism. During this periods goat, horse, sheep, camel etc. were the main production input. The property rights of an individual were determined by community and family level. In Tsarist periods, the feudal social, economic relations and attitudes remained the same. Clan nobility, who possessed large amounts of land, exploited the poor peasants. In this periods Kazakhstan with other Central Asian countries were the chief source of raw materials, but there were no industries in the region. Kazakhstan's economy was controlled by Russian metropolitan cities. With the Soviets coming in to power a tendency developed to equate women labour force with that of men. A large number of female machine operators were introduced in 1950s and 1960s. However, today in independent Kazakhstan women are suffering from occupational segregation. They are mostly employed in traditional sectors like health, education, food service, insurance etc. These sectors have very less share of GDP and low wages. Unemployment is another pertinent issue for women. After Soviet disintegration, lots of people lost their job and most of them were women. The global economic crisis has a great impact on the employment of women. The sectors which were mostly affected like oil and gas, construction etc. decreased the employment of women as well as their wages. In short, we can say that, the conditions of women in economic sector are in a miserable conditions and lot of steps are required to improve women's status.

The political status of women during pre-Soviet era was almost zero. Due to traditional patriarchal mindset women were not allowed to participate in the decision making process. When Soviets came in to power, they initiated number of reforms. Women's cooperatives were organised to empower them. Gradually they started involving themselves in the political process.

This was opposed by serious reaction from the patriarchal Kazakh society. Mostly the upper and middle class people were very much against this policy. In independent Kazakhstan, the political conditions of women are not sound. Their participation in political process remains unchanged. Although they are dominating in civil service sector, women are hardly able to hold high rank positions. They are mostly employed in regional level decision making process. Government has introduced quota system to promote them in political sphere, but still the results are not much praiseworthy.

Education could play a very pertinent role for the promotion of women empowerment. In pre-Soviet periods there was almost no women education. Cultural norms restricted them to access education. After the Soviets came in to power, they tried to improve women's educational status. Various schools were opened for women's education including special schools for women. With this woman's education gradually improved in the region. In independent Kazakhstan, education system includes, Pre-school, Primary School, Basic Secondary school(Lower), Upper Secondary school which can also be called as vocational or general school as well as post Secondary and tertiary which is studied up to Graduate and Post Graduate levels. From gender perspective, while men pursue vocational and technical education, women stick to colleges and universities with general education. This has also influenced their employment opportunities with labour market segregation. Although in educational sphere women are in a far better condition as compared to other developing nations, but they are still underrepresented in governance and employment sector. Probably, this is the greatest challenge before Kazakh government for the improvement of the status of women.

For any kind of social transformation, education is an important aspect. It could contribute to economic advancement, which improves individual's social status. The education sector in Kazakhstan is mostly dominated by women. Most of the teachers in primary and secondary level are women. One can find a close parity between male and female in Kazakhstan regarding access to primary and secondary education. Although in educational sphere women dominate, attention is required to promote them in political, economic and social sector. Only education can be regarded as panacea to solve the above problems.

Since the time of October Revolution, number of policies has been adopted by the state authority. When Soviets came in to power, they tried to include women in economic sectors. For

this various reforms were initiated such as first Land and Water Reform, 1920-21, second Land and Water Reform, 1925-29, and from 1929 collectivization of agriculture. Various debates and discussions were organised by the Soviet government for the emancipation of women. Despite this still women's position did not change to the extent as it was expected.

With the disintegration of Soviet Union, in 1991 Kazakhstan came in to being as an independent state. During its more than two and half decades of independence, the government of Kazakhstan has taken various steps to improve the status of women in accordance with international standards. Kazakhstan adopted the National Policy on Gender Equality and the Equal Rights Law to achieve gender equality with the changing roles of both women and men. In regards to combat human right violations, Kazakhstan has signed more than 60 international agreements. It ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. A positive trend can be visualised among the Kazakh women with regards to their participation in civil society as well as increase in the number of women's NGOs. The government also supports credit specifically to promote women's entrepreneurship and is trying to include the interests of women in state policy. On this regards it established the National Commission on Family and Women's Affairs under the President of Kazakhstan, the adoption of a National Action Plan to improve the situation of women, and the Concept of Gender Policy has been initiated by the Republic of Kazakhstan. The government also takes some other step as well, which includes establishment of "Otbasy" (Family) deputy group in the Parliament, introduction of the section on the protection of women's and children's rights in the National Centre on Human Rights. Again, the Republic of Kazakhstan drafted laws 'On Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women', 'On Domestic Violence' and 'the Strategy of Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016' have been developed.

All the above government programmes and policies have been implemented by the Kazakh government, but the conditions of women has not altered much. In present day scenario also women are facing various kind of discrimination both inside and outside the family. They are suffering from torture, physical violence, molestation and sexual abuse. In educational sector the condition of women seems to be in a better condition, as compared to political and economic sphere. Despite of having such large numbers of legal provisions, Kazakh women are still in a miserable condition. This poses serious challenges to the Kazakh administration, but to some

extent it can be said that, the role and apathetic attitude of state administration also act as hurdles in the path of women empowerment. In such a tragic scenario the role of civil society and educated mass has become very much pertinent.

The President also understands the importance of women's participation in political sphere along with their participation in production, particularly at new enterprises, which could gradually help them to occupy large political posts. In 2010, at the 'World Economic Forum' it was noted that, Kazakhstan occupied an honourable 41 place among 135 states. On this indicator its position was ahead of 14 states of the European Union. By analysing recent developments in Kazakhstan, there is need to adopt more up gradation policy to combat situation of gender disparities, by which women could get an opportunity to enhance their participation in socio-economic and political sectors.

While, from policy framework perspective, the government has articulated number of policies, but in practice, gender in equality still exists and such policies assist women in relatively narrow spheres. Improving the status of women requires state commitments to provide social protection to women as mothers, wives or daughters and greater focus on counteracting existing discriminatory practices and ensuring equal opportunities for both women and men. The issue of women's disadvantaged position in society is understood as the product of inherent differences between the sexes and not as arising from socially constructed inequalities. A survey was conducted by Asian Development Bank in 2010 in Kazakhstan regarding the status of women. In it a question was asked to experts on women's right about, the reason why women experience discrimination despite the existence of a law, which formally guarantees of equality of all, irrespective of class, gender, region etc. According to the sources of ADB, 62.5 percent of the respondents believed that, even in present scenario there is existence of gender bias among many politicians and civil servants. They believed that gender inequality is inevitable and natural phenomena.

This narrow understanding of gender policy has given birth to a situation, where in terms of gender approach, state programs can be categorised in to two categories. The first category is always tries to achieve gender equality by improving women's opportunities at all levels of socio-economic and political life. For example, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan has

launched specific goals to improve the status of women in political sphere and provided financial assistance with microfinance to female entrepreneurs. Besides these, Kazakh government has also initiated some other policies measures for the emancipation of women. Other programmes include, programs on motherhood, pregnancy, childbirth, expansion of child-care programs and targets were set to create preschools by 2020. However, all of the above programs do not seem as measures to promote gender equality.

The second category programs in its approach are not gender-specific, but include number of large-scale policies based on social initiatives. This includes, increasing employment, improving water supply, supporting small businesses, increasing accessibility to affordable housing, developing rural areas etc. Such types of programs are definitely going to improve the standard of living of Kazakh populations in general. However, in the aforesaid policies, in nowhere, it gives importance to existing gender disparities between men and women. These policies also did not clearly mention regarding the goals of government policies to monitor specific benefits provided to women and men.

In Kazakhstan from time to time issues were raised regarding view of men with regards to gender issues. It was found that most men understand gender equality in a limited way. They never recognize or even try to understand the mutual benefits of equality. Men are generally correlates gender equality with feminism, and believe that a gender equal society is one where women do men's jobs and everyone treated as equal. This conceptual misunderstanding of the people of Kazakhstan leads to a situation, where a very few men lead gender equality initiatives in the country. The dominant stereotypes also act as hurdles in the path of gender equality in Kazakhstan.

At the policy framework perspective Kazakhstan has taken some visible steps, but in regards to its implementation, it is yet to achieve its goal. However, from time to time various women's NGOs express their stand point regarding the disparities between women's lives in rural and urban areas, unemployment, and domestic violence.

In previous chapters, we have tested the hypotheses. The first hypothesis is related to the positive relationship between empowerment and education. The educational level of women show very consistently higher positive correlation with all the aspects of empowerment i.e. physical

mobility, decision-making power, socio-political and general awareness, social and political participation and aggregated empowerment for Kazakh women. This hypothesis is accepted for the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The second hypothesis is related to the variation in the relationship between economic status and empowerment in Kazakh society. We found a positive relationship in this aspect. Although women are more educated in Kazakhstan, in comparison to other parts of world, still they are required to empower. It is because of economic dependence of women upon the family members. After two decades of independence, though they are slightly in a better position with regards to their social status, a lot of improvement in their economic status is required. Hence this hypothesis is also accepted.

Despite of having some positive trends to deal with the situation of gender disparities, more action needs to be taken by the government. For the emancipation of women a joint cooperative effort is required from the agencies as well as peoples of Kazakhstan as a whole. To achieve this objective it is necessary to improve the level of political and legal knowledge of the peoples for their self-realization. Government needs to promote gender sensitivity programme at all levels of social, economic and political sphere. At the same time there are needs to introduce gender approaches in various sphere of development with proper implementation of the national policies. State can use gender indicators and gender statistics, to evaluate various state plans, programs, legal provisions, textbooks, study guides etc.

At the administrative level, there are needs to introduce some reformative actions. The government should take more strict actions for the implementation of the state's gender policies. For this purpose, there is need to identification of the responsible person in government structure, who is solely involved in the process of policy formulation and its implementation. By taking into consideration of gender issues, the government has to formulate various policies and programs from time to time. For better administration the civil servants, it is required to adopt innovative techniques and tools for management of gender policies.

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