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Establishing Family and Mahalla Cooperation in Career Guidance for Students Based on A Gender Approach

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Abstract: This article analyzes the importance and effective strategies of family and community cooperation in the process of guiding students toward careers based on a gender approach. It explores the social role of family and community institutions in overcoming gender stereotypes and their involvement in the career orientation of young people. The article also presents modern methods, practical recommendations, and the outcomes of social activities, offering ways to improve this process in the future.

Keywords: Gender approach, equality, overcoming stereotypes, individual abilities, family cooperation, career guidance.

Introduction: The education system plays a crucial role not only in providing knowledge and skills but also in preparing students for their future careers. Career guidance helps students choose professions that align with their abilities, interests, and the demands of the labor market. At the same time, the issue of gender equality remains a pressing concern in modern education, as eliminating gender stereotypes and ensuring equal opportunities are essential for the social and economic development of society. Career guidance is the process of directing students toward professions they may choose in the future, taking into account their abilities, interests, and social needs. It aims to help students select a career that aligns with their personal interests, capabilities, and the demands of the labor market. This process not only ensures the future success

of students but also contributes to increasing economic efficiency.

Gender equality is a fundamental human right that ensures equal access to opportunities and resources for every individual, regardless of their gender. Gender equality also contributes to reducing poverty, improving health outcomes, and fostering economic growth and development. The significance of this principle lies in its ability to promote fairness and equal treatment for all individuals, regardless of gender identity. Gender equality in areas such as education, social protection, maternal and child health, labor and employment, and decision-making processes is a key driver of societal well-being. Gender equality in education means that all students have equal opportunities regardless of their gender. Today, there are serious issues in our society concerning gender equality and inter-gender relations. In particular, traditional stereotypes in education and career guidance processes hinder young people from making free and informed career choices. Girls are often directed toward teaching, healthcare, or service-related professions, while boys are encouraged to pursue more “technical” careers such as engineering, construction, or IT. For example, in Uzbekistan, over 70% of students admitted to engineering universities are male, while in medical fields, the majority are female (according to 2022 statistics). Family and community institutions play a vital role in shaping young people's values, providing social support, and eliminating gender stereotypes. Therefore, it is essential to develop cooperation between families and communities in guiding students toward careers based on a gender-sensitive approach. In this process, family and community institutions serve as key factors in shaping young people's awareness. The gender approach is a conceptual and practical framework aimed at ensuring social, cultural, economic, and political equality between the sexes (men and women). It examines gender differences not from a biological, but from a social and cultural perspective, and strives to create equal opportunities for both men and women.

Currently, determining the level of development of countries in areas such as social affairs, economy, politics, law, and culture, as well as their position in global progress, has become increasingly important. In particular, rankings and indexes compiled based on various indicators provide the opportunity to assess the state of any country in specific fields by showing its comparative standing. A country's improved position in such rankings and indexes also reflects progress in its social, economic, political, and legal environments. Therefore, many countries around the world are

implementing targeted measures to improve their standing in international indexes and rankings. In recent years, Uzbekistan has also undertaken significant efforts to improve its position in international rankings and indexes, with special attention given to the issue of gender equality. Important steps have been taken to ensure gender equality in the country. For instance, in 2019, the Law “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” was adopted in the Republic of Uzbekistan. International organizations such as UN Women are supporting projects aimed at encouraging girls in Uzbekistan to pursue STEM fields. The “Girls in STEM” initiative, for example, offers free programming and robotics courses for girls, contributing to the promotion of gender equality. As a result of such reforms, it is noteworthy that the share of female students admitted to higher education institutions increased to 40% in 2022, which marks a significant growth compared to previous years.

Gender theory is based on the principles of human rights and equality, aiming to eliminate injustices based on gender. In the fields of employment and education, gender stereotypes often lead young people toward uncertain career paths, thereby limiting their opportunities. The family serves as the primary environment for upbringing, and the values formed there influence a young person's attitude toward future professions. The community (mahalla), as an additional social environment, supports youth and helps instill the principles of gender equality. Theoretically, applying a gender-sensitive approach in education and career guidance helps young people fully realize their potential. Gender stereotypes present in society often lead to directing girls and boys towards different professions. For example, girls are more often recommended “softer” careers such as teaching, medicine, and the arts, while boys are steered towards technical and scientific fields. These stereotypes hinder young people from fully realizing their interests and abilities, and contribute to gender inequality in the labor market.

The family is the primary environment for raising children. Parents and other close relatives can either reinforce or eliminate gender stereotypes. If family members are informed about gender equality, they will encourage children to think freely and choose a profession based on their own interests. Therefore, it is necessary to organize seminars and awareness campaigns to educate parents on gender issues.

As an important part of social life, the mahalla (community) fulfills functions such as supporting youth, ensuring social security, and contributing to education and upbringing. Mahalla leaders and activists can organize trainings, seminars, and workshops to reduce

gender stereotypes, actively collaborating with parents and youth. Mahalla resources create favorable opportunities for working together with educational institutions in this regard. The gender approach theory aims to create equal opportunities for men and women in society, promoting the abandonment of traditional stereotypes in education and career guidance. Family and mahalla, as social institutions, play a significant role in addressing issues arising from gender discrimination in employment and the labor market.

The gender approach serves to equalize students' opportunities in the career selection process. Traditionally, in Uzbek society, certain professions may be perceived as "male" or "female," which can lead to young people being directed toward fields that do not align with their abilities. Gender equality principles encourage students to choose careers based on their interests and capabilities, free from stereotypes. For example, it is important to guide girls not only toward traditional professions (such as teaching or healthcare) but also toward engineering, IT, or other technical fields. Similarly, boys should be supported in choosing creative or service-oriented professions. The family is one of the most significant factors influencing a student's career choice process. Parents often actively participate in determining their children's future professional paths. However, due to gender stereotypes, some families may impose restrictions on career choices for girls and boys. For instance, it is common to guide girls toward "safe" and "stable" professions, while encouraging boys to pursue "high-paying" or "prestigious" careers.

To involve families in this process based on the gender approach, the following measures can be taken:

- Conduct seminars for parents on gender equality principles, overcoming stereotypes in career choices, and supporting their children's abilities.
- Hold open discussions with children about career choices to help identify their interests and talents.
- Share success stories of women and men who have broken gender stereotypes with families, such as examples of female engineers or male teachers.

To strengthen cooperation between family and the mahalla, the following strategies can be applied: Organizing local events, such as open house days, seminars for workshops, and career guidance fairs at mahalla centers. During these events, parents and students can learn about various professions, and successful professionals from the mahalla can be involved as mentors for students. These programs are particularly effective in promoting STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers for

girls. Conducting awareness campaigns aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes between the mahalla and families, such as distributing promotional materials to support girls and boys equally, can be beneficial. The mahalla and families can collaborate with schools to develop career guidance projects. For example, school psychologists and mahalla activists can work together to identify students' interests.

The collaboration between family and mahalla is of great importance in guiding students toward careers based on a gender approach. While the family serves as the first step in choosing a professional path for young people, the mahalla enriches this process with social support and resources. Through strategies developed based on gender equality principles, students can be helped to choose careers that align with their abilities. This contributes not only to the personal development of young people but also to the overall well-being of society. Ensuring career guidance and gender equality in the education process is a crucial factor for Uzbekistan's social and economic development. Eliminating gender stereotypes, creating equal opportunities, and guiding students to choose careers based on their abilities can help not only build a just society but also enable each individual to realize their potential. Although Uzbekistan has taken significant steps in this direction, greater achievements can be made through systemic reforms, teacher training, and changing public consciousness. To inspire future generations to pursue their dreams, collaborative efforts from the education system, the state, and society are essential.

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