

The Transformative Effects of Globalization on the Family Institution

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Abstract: Family values assume critical importance amid the complex and multifaceted transformations currently affecting the family institution. Processes such as globalization, the proliferation of mass culture, and the prevalence of various societal stigmas and stereotypes exert significant influence on the structure and continuity of the family, a fundamental yet nuanced unit within society. Contemporary perspectives on family relationships yield both constructive and detrimental outcomes. This study critically examines the challenges faced by the family institution in Uzbekistan and evaluates their impact on its stability. Furthermore, it explores the broader ramifications of these transformations in societies characterized by the predominance of modern ideological frameworks.

Keywords: family values, family institution, social balance, national identity, national mentality, early marriage, divorce, institution of “Mahalla”.

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The prosperity of a state is fundamentally contingent upon the existence of peaceful and harmonious families, which constitute a vital component of society. Consequently, the reinforcement and stabilization of the family institution represent critical priorities within broader social development frameworks.

Family values constitute the foundational element of all societies, though their expression varies according to specific cultural and social structures. Despite differences in historical, religious, and cultural contexts, the core functions of the family remain consistent: fostering intergenerational bonds, nurturing offspring, and maintaining familial cohesion. In the context of increasing globalization, the salience of family values has been accentuated, as they play a pivotal role in preserving individual identity and sustaining social equilibrium. Therefore, the promotion of a strong national identity, adherence to shared cultural values, and the uninterrupted transmission of harmonious generational relations are essential for the consolidation of the family as a social institution.

In recent decades, the family institution has undergone significant transformations on a global scale, influenced by a complex array of economic, socio-political, and cultural processes. These processes exert both constructive and adverse effects, with the nature and extent of impact varying across different national contexts. Accordingly, distinct approaches have emerged to address the challenges and opportunities associated with family development and stability. Within the context of Uzbekistan, several

factors have been identified as particularly influential in shaping the trajectory and resilience of the family institution:

Historical and Political Factors: In Uzbekistan, the family institution is historically grounded in robust traditions and values, with the preservation of ancestral ties constituting a fundamental criterion. Nonetheless, the country's prolonged experience of colonial rule, spanning over seventy years, has partially undermined the stability and functioning of the family institution.

Socio-Cultural Factors: Family values and traditions occupy a central position within Uzbek society. Familial relationships are intricately linked to the national psyche and religious doctrines. While diverse interpretations of Islamic principles frequently serve to reinforce bonds among parents, children, siblings, and extended relatives, they may also engender adverse outcomes, including early marriage and polygamy.

Economic Factors: The transition to a market economy and the implementation of economic reforms have exerted considerable influence on the family institution. Specifically, economic hardships, unemployment, migration, and urbanization have produced a complex, dual impact on family dynamics, affecting them both positively and negatively.

Several systemic challenges within the country impede the effective implementation of state policies aimed at reinforcing the family institution, thereby constraining the full realization of reforms and the attainment of established objectives. These challenges can be delineated as follows:

First, rapid population growth has contributed to an increase in the number of families, which is accompanied by a proportional escalation in divorce rates. In 2023, for example, 283,808 marriages were registered, with 193,868 culminating in divorce¹. Contributory factors to this trend include domestic violence, consanguineous marriages, early marriages, and related social issues.

Second, there exists a limited recognition of the family institution as an integral component not only of the social fabric but also of the economic and political spheres. The role of the neighborhood (mahalla) institution in supporting family stability remains insufficient. Furthermore, the absence of a dedicated structural mechanism within the mahalla system to monitor and ensure family cohesion, safety, and harmony exacerbates this deficiency.

Third, family stability is further compromised by the emigration of spouses abroad, often motivated by divorce, economic difficulties, or inadequate vocational qualifications. This phenomenon frequently results in children being left unattended and exposed to various vulnerabilities.

Finally, the promotion of family values across educational levels is hindered by a shortage of scientifically grounded pedagogical methodologies and instructional competencies necessary to facilitate their integration with contemporary social processes.

Fifth, the scope of scientific inquiry into the reinforcement of the family institution remains constrained, with limited integration of research outcomes into practical applications. Predominantly, fundamental, applied, and innovative investigations concerning the development of the contemporary family are confined to the social sciences, thereby restricting interdisciplinary engagement and comprehensive understanding.

Sixth, there is an evident deficiency in comprehensive strategies aimed at fostering a healthy family lifestyle across the population. The insufficiency of targeted measures to facilitate optimal conditions for maternal and child health, alongside inadequate reproductive health education, has contributed to increased incidences of unintended pregnancies, a rise in the prevalence of children with disabilities, and elevated maternal and infant mortality rates.

¹ <https://stat.uz/uz/rasmiy-statistika/demography-2>

Seventh, notwithstanding the establishment of an extensive legislative framework to bolster the family institution, discrepancies persist between international normative standards and their implementation within national legal and enforcement practices. These inconsistencies pose significant obstacles to the effective realization of family policy objectives and reform measures.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has established a comprehensive legal framework to facilitate the development and stabilization of the family institution, regulating the rights and interests of individuals within familial relations through a series of legislative and regulatory instruments. The Constitution explicitly recognizes the family as the fundamental unit of society and mandates its protection by both the state and civil society.

This framework is further reinforced by key legal instruments, including Presidential Resolution No. PQ-3808 dated June 27, 2018², which endorses the Concept for Strengthening the Institution of the Family, and Presidential Decree No. PF-5325 dated February 2, 2018³, outlining measures to substantially enhance support for women and fortify the family institution. Additional legislative provisions, such as Law No. ZRQ-528 (March 11, 2019) on the Protection of Reproductive Health, Law No. ZRQ-561 (September 2, 2019) on the Protection of Women from Oppression and Violence, and Law No. URQ-562 (September 2, 2019) guaranteeing Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, contribute to the legal safeguards underpinning family welfare. Furthermore, Decree No. PF-5938⁴ (February 18, 2020) and the Presidential Decree of March 1, 2022, emphasize the enhancement of institutional support systems for families and women, as well as the strengthening of local community bodies, including the mahalla institution.

Despite clearly articulated objectives and the designation of competent authorities, the existing legal corpus lacks the establishment of a centralized coordinating mechanism responsible for overseeing inter-agency cooperation and ensuring comprehensive monitoring and reporting on the implementation of family-related policies and initiatives.

The advancement of the family institution in Uzbekistan constitutes a strategic priority within the frameworks of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026. The reinforcement of family structures is recognized as a fundamental strategy for addressing complex socio-economic challenges. Significant progress is anticipated in key sectors including poverty alleviation, optimized utilization of human capital, economic growth, education, healthcare, social protection, employment, as well as climate change mitigation and environmental sustainability.

The continued consolidation and development of the family institution, regarded as the foundational unit of society, alongside the protection and promotion of the legal and socio-economic rights of families—particularly those of young families—are imperative for the establishment of a modern family model. It is evident that such initiatives will substantially elevate the role of the family institution, enhancing its capacity to nurture physically robust, spiritually enriched, and comprehensively developed future generations.

Within this context, particular emphasis should be placed on the following dimensions:

1. Reform the operational framework of citizens' self-governing bodies by clearly delineating the distinct and non-overlapping functions of local authorities to optimize administrative efficacy.

² Presidential Resolution No. PQ-3808, dated June 27, 2018 – “On the Approval of the Concept for Strengthening the Institution of the Family in the Republic of Uzbekistan”

³ **Presidential Decree No. PF-5325, dated February 2, 2018** – “On Measures to Radically Improve Activities in the Field of Supporting Women and Strengthening the Institution of the Family”

⁴ **Presidential Decree No. PF-5938, dated February 18, 2020** – “On Measures to Improve the Socio-Spiritual Environment in Society, Further Support the Mahalla Institution, and Bring the System of Working with Families and Women to a New Level”

2. Implement proactive mechanisms for the early identification and resolution of family conflicts at the community level to reduce the incidence of divorce and prevent domestic violence.
3. Incorporate comprehensive sexual education programs within secondary and tertiary educational institutions as a preventative measure against early marriage.
4. Enhance public awareness initiatives and strengthen interagency collaboration among state institutions to promote family stability and cohesion.
5. Support and promote systematic, evidence-based research employing rigorous scientific methodologies to inform the development and implementation of family policy interventions.
6. Design and disseminate targeted social communication campaigns, including multimedia and video materials, aimed at reinforcing the family institution and addressing associated societal challenges.
7. Advocate for the development and execution of strategic initiatives by relevant authorities to support projects led by non-governmental and non-profit organizations addressing social issues impacting families.

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