

THE ROLE OF BEAUTY IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Ra'no Abduvaitova

Student at National University of Uzbekistan

named after Mirzo Ulugbek

Annotation: This article provides an analytical overview of the transformation of women's social and legal status in the 20th and early 21st centuries, with a special focus on the role of "beauty" in the process of gender equality. It explores how the concept of beauty has evolved historically, religiously, culturally, and economically, and how it has become institutionalized in patriarchal societies. The paper also analyzes how modern industry has commercialized female beauty and how beauty standards can impose restrictions on women's freedom and agency. Additionally, statistical data is used to illustrate the decline in birth rates and the changing role of women in family and society.

Keywords :Women's rights, Gender equality, Concept of beauty, Patriarchy, Industry and female image, Feminist critique, Mass culture, Physical appearance and social pressure, Birth rate, Women's social role.

At the end of the 20th century and especially at the beginning of the 21st century, democratic freedoms began to be strongly promoted in nearly all countries around the world. Societies that were previously dominated by systems of inequality and lack of rights began transforming into constitutional and classless societies. This, in turn, demanded the equalization of social rights for men and women. Although the rights of men and women first began to be documented at the end of the 18th century, it was only in the mid-1970s that the global community started recognizing the need for institutional mechanisms to improve the status of women. During the UN-declared "Decade for Women" (1975–1985), and in the UN conferences held in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995), significant attention was given to establishing institutional mechanisms to ensure gender equality. However, it was the International Bill of Human Rights adopted in 1966 that was universally accepted as

the global standard for the protection of human rights. Today, women have gained legal rights and freedoms, including reproductive autonomy. They are receiving higher education, demonstrating leadership skills, and entering diverse professions. They have radically transformed the traditionally fixed perceptions of their social roles. So, what is the significance of "beauty" in the context of women's rights? What is the connection between women's beauty and their rights?

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Since the beginning of human existence, people have aspired to beauty, a tendency especially attributed to men. This inclination continues today. Throughout different historical periods, beauty has been defined in different ways. For example, during the Middle Ages, when religious governance was dominant, beauty was given a divine interpretation. Women were seen as symbols and creators of beauty. Even in ancient times, women's beauty was reflected in divine female figures such as Ishtar, Venus, Cybele, and Isis. In contrast, positivists of the modern era viewed beauty in terms of physical appearance and aging, clinging to superficial ideas. Some scholars argue that the "gold standard of beauty" is like a currency system — the final and most effective tool to maintain male dominance. Regardless of the era, the primary consumers of beauty have always been men. The idea of beauty is not a myth invented about women. Rather, it is an institution belonging to men and established by male-dominated systems. While concepts of beauty have always existed in some form since the patriarchal era, its modern version emerged more recently. Before the industrial age, the average woman did not relate to beauty in the same way modern women do. Prior to the rise of mass production technologies, women were not exposed to this kind of "miracle." At that time, the family was a unit of production, and the value of a woman's beauty was measured by her labor skills, resourcefulness, physical strength, and productivity. Physical appearance had little significance. The modern concept of beauty began to spread after industrial advancement. As the family ceased to be a production unit and production moved to specialized factories and institutions, men became the dominant labor force. The middle class expanded and their education and

living standards improved. As a result, a new class of educated, non-working women emerged. From this period onward, new approaches to beauty developed with the emergence of mass production technologies such as photography and engraving. These technologies introduced ideals of what women should look like. For example, in 1840, the first photographs of naked prostitutes were taken, and by the mid-19th century, advertisements began using the image of the "beautiful" woman. After World War II, domestic labor was replaced by an unproductive obsession with maintaining beauty. While women were being increasingly influenced by economics, law, religion, education, and culture, their consciousness absorbed new understandings of beauty. This new approach to female beauty stimulated the development of certain industrial sectors: the diet industry (with a turnover of \$13 billion per year), the cosmetics industry (\$20 billion), cosmetic surgery 74 SCIENCE AND INNOVATION IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM International scientific-online conference (\$300 million), and the pornography industry (\$7 billion). These industries became so dominant that they overtook other sectors and played a key role in the economic growth of some countries. The development of these "delicate" industries turned beauty into a function of physical appearance, dieting, cosmetic surgery, and makeup. These practices disrupted longstanding social norms and deeply reshaped women's worldviews. Modern research shows that many confident, attractive, successful, and entrepreneurial women still face a hidden threat to their freedom — beauty. According to Naomi Wolf, the modern obsession with youth and thinness constitutes a culture of worship that objectively exists everywhere, though it is accepted to varying degrees. For example, the Mauri people favor fuller sexual features, the Padung tribe prefers sagging breasts, and in many Western countries, women's beauty is determined solely by appearance. Conclusion Today, when we talk about gender equality, we must acknowledge that beauty is undermining many of the positive gains of feminism. Beautiful women are more likely to be subjected to sexual threats, harassment, assault, and rape. Such violence reinforces the perception of male power and dominance. In modern global societies — and in Uzbekistan in particular — the birth rate among women and the

time spent raising children has significantly declined. Recent statistics confirm this trend. For instance, between 2000 and 2004, the general fertility rate in Uzbekistan decreased from 2.59 in 2000 to 2.21 in 2004

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