

## UZBEK FAMILY AND POSITION OF WOMEN

Uzbekistan is a country with more than 60% of rural population, so influence of the rural style of life dominated not only in private spheres of low urban strata but different sides of life of other strata and of society in common - family relations and relations in the society. The society and a family remained traditional and patriarchal despite 70 years of Soviet modernization. Uzbek society even through it's experienced industrialization and least superficially bore the marking of urban culture dressed in ideological dressed in ideologically cloak of socialism in essence was slow to throw of the powerful remnants of medievalism in social life. Secularization of social life proved to be purely superficial and modern culture was not born out of an evolutionary process of societal and economic development. It became clear after collapse of Soviet Union.

A family has always been one of custodians of traditional culture and in order to understand the true status of women in society, it is necessary to look at how woman feels about her role within family traditionally regarded as the sphere of woman realization. The family remained the most reliable bulwark in struggle for survival. According to perception of Muslim tradition of marriage is regarded as mean of procreation and person's religious duty, rejecting it is perceived as contradicting the world outlook of those who have been brought up as Muslim.

Adherence to the authority of elders, mutual support among relatives and neighbors, ruling elite's patronage of socially infringed and practice of placing faith in one's patrons, women's subordination and having several children are common for Uzbek society as consequence of the strict religious restrictions of life according *adat* and *shariat*. So conservation nurtured through the routine of daily life, forms of social interaction, rituals, and habits. In this environment it is cultivated generally negative attitudes toward a person's individual value, man sought importance within their own families to be a master in their own home.

The influence of modern style of life exists only within little strata urban middle class, but most Uzbek families stay patriarchal. These families have hierarchical structure and every member of family has and knows own role in family. The head of family considers husband or father (in case of three-generation family) who has advantage decision making role in who has indisputable prestige. He has leading and control duties in family. The wife has subordinate position, she has role of manager of her household, nursing for husband, children and for elder members of family.

The nature of interpersonal family relations defines by *adat*. During 20<sup>th</sup> century family's relations transformed slowly but at the soviet time there were transformation of internal life of family towards to modernization in cases of working wife outside home and two-salary family budget defined more free relations in family, such families oriented to more emotional values as respect to work of woman and her care about other members of family. But number of this type of family did not increase in transition time because unemployment increased among women and revival of traditions became the slogan of state. New rich Uzbeks, corrupted elements with poor education, new petty-bourgeois strata have aggressive attitude towards the modern tendencies, which had begun to permeate the life of modern Uzbeks through interaction with democratic values systems. These elements strengthened impatience with alien culture and it's in the life in country. Especially they opposed the education for women, their willing to work especially in high-paid work and

their desire for economic independence. They cultivate the ideal of patriarchal family with subordinate position for women. The majority of Uzbek families restored or preserved traditional forms of interpersonal relations in family according *adat*.

What is a peculiarity of interpersonal relations in traditional Uzbek family? Younger children are under the control of elders, girls are under control of boys even they are younger. Especially if first child is boy he should manage of younger children, he defines their duties what they should do at home or in plot, who should see for animals or garden. Elder brother have decision making in cased marriage of his sisters because boy according traditions has many friends in street or in neighborhood and they should know positive or negative features of the candidate to be bride-boy. In cases of arrangement of a bride parents ask opinion of their elder son.

Uzbek marriage is at most arrangement marriage. Parents decide who can be husbands of their daughters and who should be wives for their sons. The mother goes for match-making to different families these have same economic and social status and try to find brides for her son. Usually she visits according recommendation of family's friends or relatives, she evaluates bride and recommend seeing her to her son. Son considers this process positive because he knows at first that his wife should live friendly with his mother, bride should like to him too and after parents of girl decide about date of wedding and talk about procedure of rituals and expenses for wedding. So mothers at most choose brides to their sons and in is considered normal by boys. Usually boy and girl have few meetings with each other under the control of relatives and in the reality it is not words about love or about more knowledge or emotional links to each other because traditionally it is considering that main goal of marriage is to have children and that worlds of women and men are separated and they should live in own world.

In the traditional conscience it is permission for boy to have sexual relations before marriage but for girl it is shame, there is duty to be virgin for girl-bride. It is shame and sin if girl has meetings in cinema or other public places with a boy without permission of parents even they have no sexual relations, nobody married her if there is known that she had same meeting in past. If she is married after these rumors her husband usually remembers about this and it could be reason for the jealousy during long time or even for divorce. It is very difficult for girl to prolong the time of the wedding after an arrangement for continuing education or other reasons, family of boy can refuse and it will be shame for family. It is usual the reason of dropping girls from secondary or high education.

Uzbek wedding is very expensive procedure as for family of boy as for family of girl. During few time young couple should live with family of parents especially elder son and young bride becomes new member of family and her status is lowest. Boy's family should give to the young couple a room or a house. The girl bride should carry dowry - all goods for room or house: bed and table lingerie, dishes and etc. There is exchange by presents between families and they should be adequate by costs. It is the base for the future conflicts: If mother in law is not pleased by daughter in law she usually criticizes the wedding' presents.

Many problems of young couple are decided by parents, young woman should help to mother in law according her orders: nursing of younger members of family, cooking, baking, cleaning, washing and see for animals or plot, meet guests and etc. Mother in law who has married sons gives many time to her neighborhood's obligations and visits to families'

events of neighbors and relatives so great domestic work lies to shoulders of young woman. She does not have time for her education and health, she has not enough time for dream and own development. According to local norms young woman should ask permission for visiting own parents or relatives. In the base of these norms is a view that young bride should respect her parents in law and elder members of husband's family. If she would like to continue education or work outside of home she should have permission of husband and his parents. The important reason of the restoration of patriarchal principles in interfamily relations from the generation to the generation is the tendencies of bringing-up in family. Boys and girls are brought up according to their sex. Boys and girls lead to different interfamily roles, values, behaviors and goals. The sex becomes a factor of discrimination. Girls are limited in their choices; they are limited in their life goals. Women's protests are punished and they are afraid to become alien to members of their own families and own relatives. So women agree with current situations and take up many obligations that limit their freedom and their rights in favor of their own future and for preserving right to be a wife and a mother and status of married woman.

The other problem for women in patriarchal family becomes domestic violence, polygamy and divorce. Domestic violence statistics do not exist. At first families try to keep in secret these cases, at second the society does not recognize as a violence humiliation of rights of women, at third neighborhood considers that humiliated woman is punished for her bad behavior and that she does not do her woman's obligations well. Woman is afraid to lose the status of married woman. Also she worries for the future of her children, especially girls because it will be difficult to find husband for daughter of single woman. The form of protests of woman against regular domestic violence becomes a suicide, number of which does not decrease during many years.

The reasons of domestic violence could be different. Alcoholism or drug abuse of husbands, poor dowry, cruelty of mother in law, the absence of child and bad health of wife or her decease, poverty, conflicts with relatives of husband, her willingness to work outside home or her willingness to have education and profession, polygamy and conflicts with second(or first) wife. It is common sexual violence to own wife. There are cases of economic violence when wife could not spend own earning as she wants or if she spends it for her parents without permission of her husband. Domestic violence exists in rural and urban families, poor and wealthy families and it exists because man considers that he has right to punish his wife as a subordinated person and man claims wife should be absolutely submissive to his orders, and even because he considers that wife and children are his property.

There are problems of divorce in the patriarchal society. Women who saw an exit from domestic violence in divorce had problems with an opinion of neighborhood. Woman's decision about divorce had no support, because the idea of state for strengthening and support of family was a barrier for receiving permission for divorce from neighborhood council. Neighborhood councils expressed opinion of patriarchal environment of neighbors and relatives and pressed on a woman to persuade to return to family in favor of the future of children and to adequately play her family role as subordinate and submissive person.

Despite the existence in legislation the points about punishment for domestic violence there are only few cases of punishment for this crime. The barrier for punishment for domestic violence is patriarchal view to interfamily relations and a role of woman in family. Problem of domestic violence became open and discussed thanks to activity of independent women's NGOs in Uzbekistan these worked during 1995-2005. They concentrated their attention on

the society to the problem of domestic violence in and included this problem to agenda of alternative reports for CEDAW Committee. Uzbek women's NGOs talked about new legislation on domestic violence but initiative was not realized. Uzbek NGOs considered that neighborhood councils were not legal institutions and they had no rights to be a barrier for willing of woman to claim divorce. After advocacy on this topic woman could appeal to court about divorce without permission of neighborhood councils.

Problem of divorce became actual because the right of women to have part of family property was broken because it belonged to parents of husband and she could not receive place there after divorce and parental sides of relatives do not give place for her living and so very often women stayed after divorce outside at the street. Many of them were forced to migrate illegally to capital or abroad for work in domestic servitude. There is great number of victims of human-trafficking among divorced women who were before victims of domestic violence.

The practice of polygamy increased from beginning 1991, It was proclaimed as national tradition and polygamy was discussed as support single women who have right to have family and children. Ideologists of polygamy contempt single women and recommended to restore polygamy in official legislation. Despite civil legislation forbids polygamy it exists according to *adat*. Practice of polygamy is wide spread in new rich strata and clergy. There are many cases of non-adult girls involved to polygamy according *nikah*. They have no legal status of married women and very often they become victims of domestic violence. In cases when husbands of these girls push them out from home according to *talaq* they have no legal protection. They stay without education, profession and home and most of them are involved in trafficking of women.

So the topic of domestic violence becomes one of key aspects of women rights as human rights. Governmental pressure to civil society including women's NGOs does not permit to openly discuss this problem in my country and involve society to work for elimination of domestic violence.