

THE ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE IN PROTECTING WOMEN’S RIGHTS

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Protection of women’s rights is currently one of the priority directions of state policy, and the formation of effective institutional mechanisms in this regard is of particular importance. One of such mechanisms is the Ombudsman institution, which plays an important role in ensuring and protecting human rights, including women’s rights. The Ombudsman is an independent and impartial oversight body aimed at restoring the violated rights of citizens by state bodies and officials [1]. Its activities are also significant in strengthening legal protection guarantees for women.

The main function of the Ombudsman institution is to restore violated rights through the consideration of citizens’ complaints. Practice shows that women often face various forms of rights violations in social, economic, and family relations. In such cases, appealing to the Ombudsman provides women with an opportunity to protect their rights in a more accessible and relatively faster extrajudicial procedure. For example, a certain portion of the complaints received by the Ombudsman Office in Uzbekistan directly concerns issues related to women’s rights. This demonstrates that the institution serves as an important protection mechanism for women.

Another key feature of the Ombudsman institution is its independence. It operates without subordination to legislative or executive authorities, which ensures objective and fair consideration of complaints [2]. This is particularly important in cases involving violations of women’s rights, such as discrimination in employment relations, unlawful dismissal, or domestic violence. In such situations, investigations and recommendations carried out by the Ombudsman are of great significance. These recommendations are often taken into account by state bodies and contribute to the resolution of problems.

In recent years, the powers of the Ombudsman institution in Uzbekistan have been expanded, and its activities have been further improved. Special attention is being paid to the protection of women’s and children’s rights. The organization of mobile receptions by the Ombudsman, as well as visits to penitentiary institutions, also serve as important tools in ensuring women’s rights. In particular, the activities of the Ombudsman are especially important for vulnerable groups of women, including persons with disabilities, single mothers, and socially vulnerable categories of the population.

Looking at international experience, the role of the Ombudsman institution in protecting women’s rights is highly valued in many countries. For example, in European states, the Ombudsman provides important recommendations on ensuring gender equality, eliminating discrimination against women, and improving public policy. In addition, by cooperating with international organizations, the Ombudsman contributes to aligning national legislation with international standards.

The preventive activity of the Ombudsman institution is also of great importance in protecting women’s rights. It not only addresses existing problems but also implements measures aimed at preventing them. For instance, conducting legal awareness campaigns, increasing the legal literacy of the population, and especially spreading legal knowledge among women help prevent potential rights violations in the future. This contributes to strengthening women’s rights through the development of legal culture.

At the same time, there are certain challenges in the activities of the Ombudsman. In some cases, a lack of sufficient public awareness about the institution, limited knowledge of complaint procedures, or a low level of legal culture prevents full utilization of its opportunities. Therefore, it is necessary to widely promote the activities of this institution and provide the public with detailed information about its functions and capabilities.

In preventing cases of harassment and violence against women, strengthening their legal protection, and ensuring parliamentary oversight over the activities of state bodies, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) plays an important institutional role. According to official annual reports in recent years, the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman bodies averages around 18,000–20,000 cases, more than 30% of which are submitted by women. This indicator shows that issues related to women’s rights remain highly relevant in society [3].

In preventing cases of violence and harassment against women, the Ombudsman institution primarily relies on a preventive and monitoring approach. According to annual reports, mobile receptions are regularly organized across the country, during which thousands of citizens, including women, are directly engaged. In these processes, cases such as domestic violence, alimony issues, and violations of labor rights are examined on the spot, and a portion of them are resolved promptly.

Within the framework of monitoring activities, the Ombudsman annually inspects more than 200 closed and social institutions. During these inspections, the state of women’s rights protection, their living conditions, and existing safeguarding mechanisms are analyzed. Based on identified shortcomings, hundreds of recommendations are submitted to relevant state bodies, and their implementation is placed under supervision. This process plays an important role in identifying hidden forms of violence and preventing them.

The complaint-handling system is one of the key tools in strengthening the legal protection of women. According to official data, a significant share of complaints submitted to the Ombudsman by women is related to violations in labor relations, family disputes, and social protection issues. Based on these complaints, positive outcomes have been recorded in dozens of cases, including reinstatement of women in their jobs, recovery of alimony, and restoration of legal rights.

Legal awareness activities are also expanding. In recent years, more than 300 seminars and meetings have been organized by the Ombudsman and its regional representatives, involving 15,000–20,000 women and citizens. These events are aimed at increasing legal literacy among women and providing practical knowledge on how to respond in cases of violence.

From the perspective of parliamentary oversight, the Ombudsman annually submits reports to the Oliy Majlis. These reports separately analyze issues related to women’s rights and provide specific proposals for improving legislation. For example, recent reports indicate that labor-related complaints account for around 10–15% of all cases, which shows that gender equality issues in the labor market remain relevant. In addition, due to the development of digital complaint systems, about 35–40% of complaints are now submitted through online platforms, which provides greater convenience and allows women to apply in an anonymous and secure manner.

In conclusion, based on official statistical data, it can be stated that the Ombudsman institution in Uzbekistan has become an effective and practical mechanism for reducing violence and harassment against women, protecting their rights, and strengthening parliamentary oversight. Indicators such as the number of complaints, mobile receptions, monitoring activities, and legal awareness programs confirm the broad practical impact of this institution.

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