

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Thesis title: GENDER INEQUALITY IN RURAL AREAS, THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IN TAJIKISTAN

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Abstract

This thesis provides a comprehensive examination of gender inequality in rural Tajikistan, with a focus on the Bustonqala village in the Kushoniyon district. The study explores the multifaceted nature of gender disparities within the contexts of education, employment, health care, and decision-making, underpinned by traditional socio-cultural norms and economic structures. Through a mixed-methods approach involving structured questionnaires and interviews with twelve participants (nine females and three males), this research reveals significant challenges that rural women face, including limited access to education and employment, inadequate gender-specific health services, and prevalent domestic violence.

The analysis demonstrates a pronounced gender divide in decision-making roles within households, where males predominantly assume primary decision-making positions. Moreover, the study uncovers systemic barriers to women's economic empowerment, including restricted access to financial resources and property. A critical finding is the universal perception among participants of an increase in gender inequality over time, underscoring the urgency for targeted interventions.

Based on the GAD approach, Feminist Political Economy, Social Reproduction Theory, and Intersectionality, the thesis proposes comprehensive strategies for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in rural Tajikistan. Recommendations include the development of educational initiatives, economic empowerment programs, improvements in health care access, and policies to mitigate domestic violence. The research calls for participatory

approaches that engage community members in addressing gender disparities, alongside robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress.

This study contributes to the broader discourse on gender inequality in developing countries, providing insights into the specific challenges and opportunities for intervention in rural Tajikistan. The findings and recommendations offer a foundation for policymakers, NGOs, and community leaders to implement effective measures for achieving gender equality and empowering women in rural areas, thereby enhancing overall rural development.

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Rural Development, Tajikistan, Women's Empowerment, Educational Access, Economic Opportunities, Health care Access, Domestic Violence.