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ANALYSIS OF PRACTICAL MEASURES TO REDUCE THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN POVERTY

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the conceptual foundations, content, and practical effectiveness of institutional and strategic approaches aimed at reducing the proportion of women among the poor. The study frames poverty not merely as a lack of income, but as a deeply rooted, multifaceted socio-economic phenomenon. It emphasizes that in contexts where gender inequality persists, women are disproportionately affected by poverty and are more likely to remain in vulnerable socio-economic positions.

Women's exclusion from formal employment, limited access to financial services and resources, as well as the heavy burden of unpaid domestic labor, significantly reduce their economic activity and serve as structural barriers to escaping poverty.

KEY WORDS: *Women's Poverty, Gender Inequality, Empowerment, Social Policy, Inclusive Development, Institutional Barriers, Multidimensional Poverty, Microfinance, Labor Market, Strategic Approaches.*

1.INTRODUCTION

In the context of modern socio-economic development, the poverty rate has emerged as one of the key indicators of population well-being and sustainable progress. The poverty rate is defined as the proportion of the population living below the established minimum standard of living. This indicator is directly linked to levels of income, consumption, health, education, employment, and access to other essential social services"[1].

When analyzed from a gender perspective, this indicator reveals that women constitute one of the most vulnerable and socially disadvantaged segments of the population. Compared to men, women are more likely to be excluded from formal employment and face restricted access to financial resources, which significantly hinders their ability to escape poverty.

The study of poverty levels and contributing factors among the population particularly within specific social groups and categories has become one of the most pressing issues at the center of attention for various research communities.

Research in this area is essential not only for ensuring social equity but also for achieving macroeconomic stability. In particular, assessing the effectiveness of social protection policies and evaluating the outcomes of state programs aimed at poverty reduction across different regions presents numerous challenges and complexities.

State support measures such as subsidies, social benefits, employment programs, and mechanisms for promoting entrepreneurship play a significant role in reducing poverty levels. However, the effectiveness of these measures varies across regions and among different social groups.

Therefore, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth analysis of regional approaches to poverty alleviation and to develop differentiated strategies that take into account socio - economic disparities.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, a number of measures are being implemented to address this issue. In particular, reducing the proportion of women living in poverty meaning the share of women among the total number of

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people in poverty has become a key priority of national policy"[2]. To achieve this goal, comprehensive mechanisms are being implemented in practice, including the involvement of women in small business and entrepreneurial activities, the provision of preferential microcredit, the organization of vocational training and retraining programs, as well as ensuring convenient access to social services such as kindergartens and healthcare.

These mechanisms not only enhance women's economic participation but also strengthen their social integration and ability to make independent decisions. Therefore, reducing the proportion of women in poverty is not merely a statistical indicator, but a critical measure of a society's progress toward social justice and sustainable development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In modern academic literature, poverty is regarded as a complex, multifactorial socio-economic phenomenon. Depending on its causes, duration, social structure, and individual circumstances, it is classified into the following main types:

1. Absolute Poverty

Absolute poverty is defined as a condition in which an individual is unable to meet basic life necessities. In this situation, a person cannot afford minimal standards of living such as food, clothing, shelter, and essential healthcare services[3]. Absolute poverty is predominantly observed in economically deprived, underdeveloped regions with inadequate infrastructure.

2. Relative Poverty

Relative poverty refers to a situation where an individual's income is significantly below the average or median income level of the society. While individuals in this category may be able to meet basic survival needs, they are often excluded from full participation in social life lacking access to quality education, modern communication tools, cultural events, and a healthy lifestyle. Relative poverty is seen as a driver of social exclusion, injustice, and public dissatisfaction.

3. Structural Poverty

Structural poverty is associated with systemic imbalances, socio-economic inequalities, and institutional shortcomings within a society. It is a long-term and persistent condition characterized by reliance on low-paid or seasonal work and limited access to quality education and healthcare services. This type of poverty is most prevalent among marginalized groups such as those living in remote areas, persons with disabilities, women, ethnic minorities, and labor migrants.

4. Intergenerational Poverty (Transmissive Poverty)

Intergenerational poverty refers to the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next, where children born into poor households remain trapped in poverty due to limited opportunities. The primary causes include parents' low educational attainment, lack of stable income sources, and the absence of social mobility mechanisms such as access to quality education, vocational training, and employment opportunities. This type of poverty reinforces long-term social injustice and deepens structural inequality within society.

5. Short-Term Poverty

Short-term or cyclical poverty refers to a temporary condition of deprivation caused by unexpected life events such as job loss, health problems, divorce, or natural disasters. In such situations, individuals or households fall from a previously stable position into a state of crisis. Without timely and appropriate support mechanisms, short-term poverty can evolve into long-term or even structural poverty.

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[2] *Chant S. The Feminization of Poverty and the 'Feminization' of Anti-Poverty Programmes: Room for Revision? // Journal of Development Studies, 2008, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 165–197.*

[3] *Selivanova O.V., Razumov A.A. Poverty of the Working Population: Analysis of the Main Trends and Experience of the Regions in Reducing its Level. Labor Economics. 2023;10(2):279-296. DOI: 10.18334/et.10.2.117385*

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6. Hidden Poverty

Hidden poverty refers to a form of poverty that is not reflected in official statistics but exists in reality. In such cases, individuals or households may not be officially classified as "poor" based on income levels, yet they struggle to meet basic living expenses, cannot satisfy essential needs, and require serious social protection. These individuals often include informal workers, self-employed producers, or groups who have opted out of or been excluded from social services.

Thus, the study conducted by Atozou (2017) interprets women's poverty not as a mere lack of income, but as a complex socio-economic issue deeply rooted in gender inequalities. The high proportion of women among the poor is especially pronounced in contexts where the balance of power in society shifts in favor of men, where the distribution of resources is unequal, and where gender-based discrimination persists in the labor market.

For example, according to Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender (2002), an analysis of more than 45 empirical studies on women's empowerment reveals that the majority of them assess factors such as women's role in decision-making, financial autonomy, and access to education as key mechanisms for escaping poverty. This approach underscores the need to consider not only economic but also social resources in efforts to reduce poverty.

Moreover, as emphasized by Chant and Sylvia (2010), women are experiencing what is termed the "feminization of poverty." They argue that poverty should not be measured solely by the growing number of women affected, but rather by the depth of their structural vulnerabilities within society.

Furthermore, studies conducted by Faborode and Alao (2016) demonstrate that empowering women economically, socially, and legally is a comprehensive and strategically significant tool in the fight against poverty. Women's empowerment not only ensures their personal economic freedom and social stability, but also contributes to sustainable economic growth, social justice, and more efficient resource distribution across society. Fully realizing women's potential is directly linked to increased household income, improved child health, and access to quality education making it a critical factor in achieving long-term poverty reduction at the macroeconomic level.

However, in practice, poverty reduction policies have predominantly targeted men, which has further widened productivity and income disparities between men and women and exacerbated gender inequality. Moreover, traditional approaches to poverty analysis, policy formulation, and monitoring systems have largely failed to incorporate gender-specific differences. As a result, the effectiveness of poverty reduction measures has significantly declined.

Analyzing the definitions above, Razumov and Selivanova (2021) also assert that there is no universal definition of poverty, emphasizing that its understanding depends on each country's social structure, cultural values, and level of development. They further highlight the importance of using a comprehensive system of indicators when addressing poverty among women.

Therefore, it is essential to analyze poverty not solely through general economic indicators, but from a gender perspective, taking into account context-specific needs and designing tailored policy measures accordingly. Only under such an approach can poverty reduction efforts lead to genuine inclusivity and social justice.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a methodological approach aimed at analyzing practical measures to reduce the proportion of women in poverty. It thoroughly examined factors such as increasing women's economic activity, expanding employment opportunities, access to social protection mechanisms, and the impact of unpaid labor burdens. Using methods of analysis and synthesis, abstract-logical reasoning, and scientific generalization, the research evaluated the institutional, economic, and cultural barriers that contribute to gender inequality and the feminization of poverty.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULT

Practical research on reducing women's poverty demonstrates that poverty cannot be effectively addressed without ensuring gender equality. The evidence gathered throughout the study shows that women's low level of economic activity contributes not only to insufficient individual income but also to elevated levels of household and regional

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poverty. Limited opportunities for women in the labor market, their underrepresentation in formal employment, and the inadequacy of social infrastructure to meet women's specific needs have been identified as key structural factors exacerbating this issue.

Moreover, programs aimed at microfinancing women, providing vocational retraining, and supporting family-based entrepreneurship have shown positive outcomes as effective pathways out of poverty. However, the uneven regional distribution of these mechanisms and the weakness of monitoring systems have hindered the sustainability and consistency of their results.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that practical approaches to reducing women's poverty cannot rely solely on economic measures, but must also be shaped through institutional reforms, gender-sensitive policies, and the dismantling of social and cultural stereotypes.

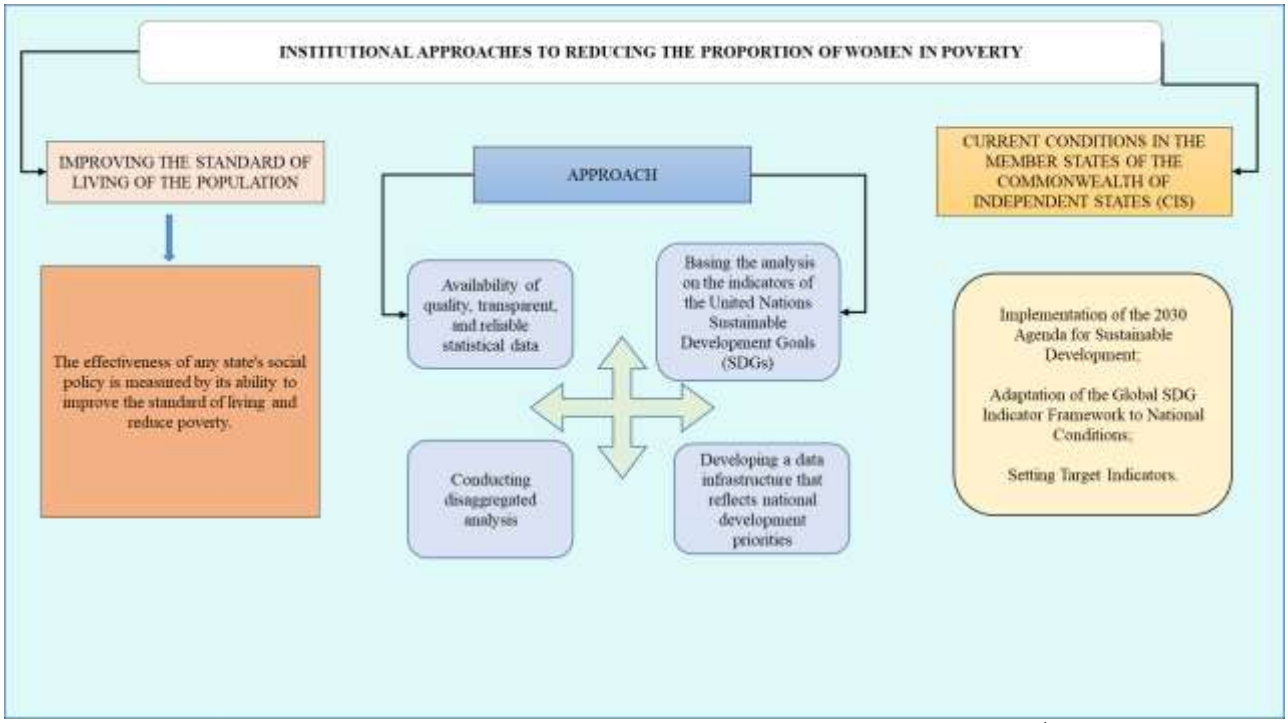


Figure - 1. Classification of systemic and strategic approaches to poverty reduction[4]

Institutional approaches aimed at reducing the proportion of women in poverty must be built on a multi-dimensional foundation that integrates national development goals with international commitments. The core of such strategies lies in enhancing the standard of living and addressing systemic gender disparities through effective social policy. As the diagram illustrates, the effectiveness of any state's efforts to combat poverty is closely tied to its ability to improve living standards, which directly influences women's economic empowerment and resilience against poverty.

To ensure policy effectiveness, these approaches must rely on high-quality, transparent, and reliable statistical data, accompanied by disaggregated analysis that captures gender-specific realities. Aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly through the adaptation of global indicators to national contexts, is key to ensuring relevance and comparability. Furthermore, developing robust data infrastructure that reflects national priorities and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) provides a critical framework for targeted interventions. Without such comprehensive, data-driven and context-sensitive approaches, efforts to reduce poverty among women risk remaining fragmented and unsustainable.

[4] By made author

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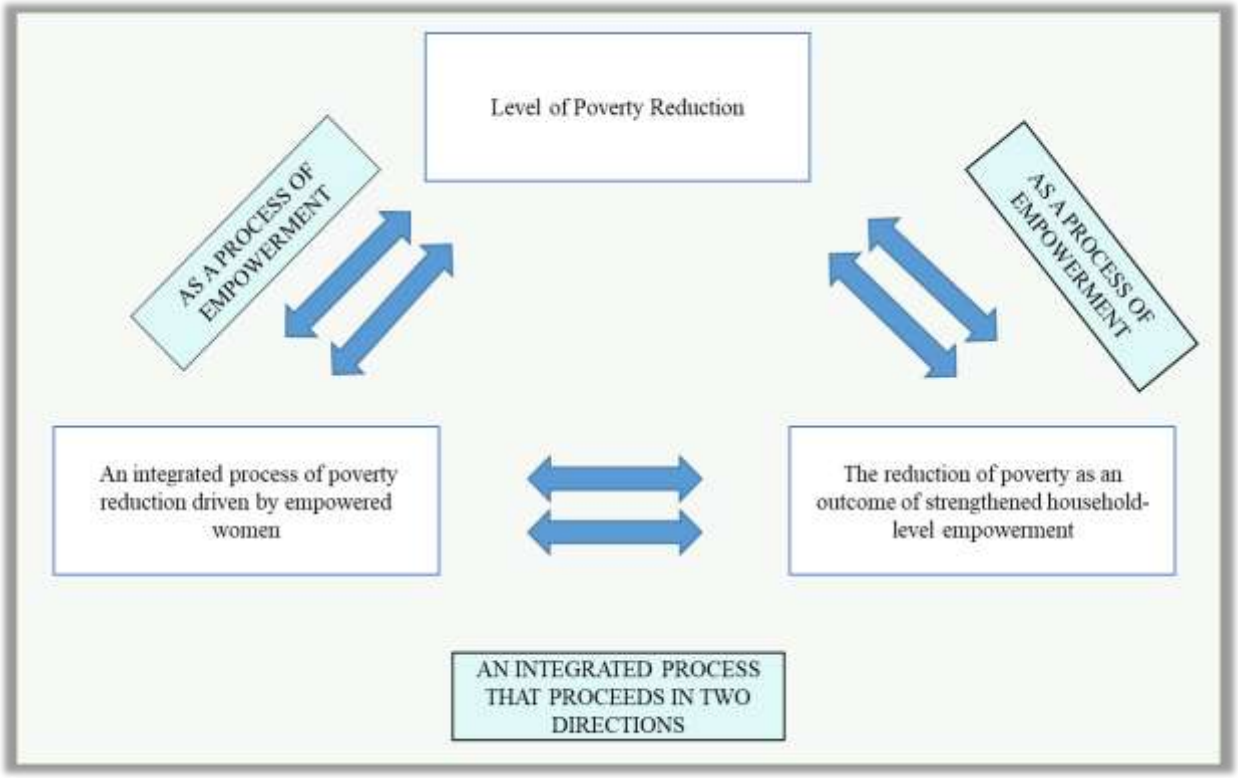


Figure - 2. The institutional process of reducing poverty through women's empowerment[5]

Empowering women economically and socially is one of the key instruments in reducing poverty, and this process unfolds as an integrated two - way relationship. On the one hand, strong, self-confident, and economically active women generate stable sources of income at the household level, improve family well-being, and directly contribute to the healthy development of their children.

On the other hand, political and economic measures aimed at poverty reduction serve to expand women's opportunities by facilitating their participation in the labor market, improving their access to financial resources, and enhancing their ability to benefit from social services.

This process reflects two interdependent dimensions of poverty reduction: empowerment as both a means and an outcome. Empowered women act as drivers of poverty alleviation, while declining poverty levels further reinforce empowerment at both the household and community levels.

As a result, this mutually reinforcing model strengthens gender equality and contributes to a consistent reduction in poverty depth. Therefore, placing women's potential at the center of poverty reduction strategies is not only necessary it is fundamental to sustainable and inclusive development.

[5] *By Made Author*

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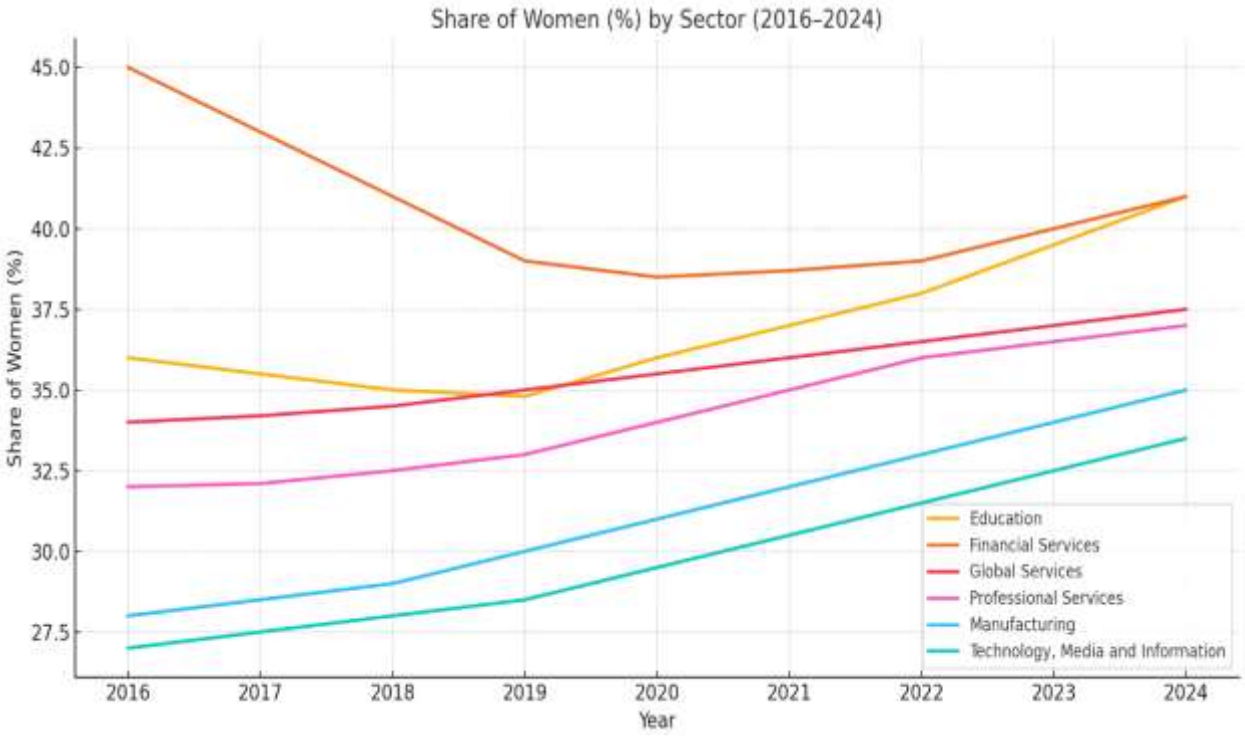


Figure - 3. Structural analysis of women's participation in the artificial intelligence industry[6]

The analysis of women's participation across sectors from 2016 to 2024 reveals a steady upward trend in fields such as education, technology, media and information, and professional services. Notably, the technology sector saw a significant rise in female representation from approximately 27.5% in 2016 to 34.5% in 2024 indicating a gradual narrowing of the gender gap in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

In contrast, financial services experienced a decline in women's share from 2016 to 2020, followed by a modest recovery in subsequent years. Overall, the consistent increase in women's involvement across all sectors reflects the positive impact of targeted gender equality policies and institutional reforms aimed at promoting inclusive economic participation.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, we summarize the conclusions and the achieved results:
The findings of the study indicate that reducing the proportion of women in poverty is not merely an economic issue but a complex strategic challenge linked to social, cultural, and institutional factors. Women's exclusion from formal employment, limited access to financial resources, and the heavy burden of unpaid labor have been identified as key barriers to escaping poverty. Overcoming these obstacles requires empowering women both economically and socially as a necessary and effective measure. Women's empowerment functions as both a means and an outcome of poverty reduction in an interconnected, two - way process.

On one hand, economically active, educated, and independent women increase household income and contribute directly to the healthy development of their children. On the other hand, government programs aimed at supporting women - such as microfinance, vocational retraining, entrepreneurship incentives, and improved access to social services have shown tangible results in reducing poverty sustainably.

[6] *This analysis was prepared by the researcher based on data from the World Economic Forum - Global Gender Gap Report 2023 (https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2023).*

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Therefore, policies aimed at reducing women's poverty should not rely solely on short term economic interventions, but must be based on comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and regionally adapted institutional strategies. Fully utilizing women's potential and enhancing their socio - economic engagement is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This approach not only reduces poverty levels but also serves as a foundation for ensuring social justice and inclusivity within society.

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