



THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FOLKLORE PERFORMANCE (TRADITIONAL AND MODERN)

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Annotation

This article analyzes the role and significance of women in folklore performance in a historical-traditional and modern socio-cultural context. Women have participated in Uzbek folk oral art not only as listeners, but also as active creators and performers. The article analyzes the expression of the traditional female image in folk songs, epics, legends and tales, as well as the activities of women in stage performance, media and cultural events today. Along with the genetic aspects of folklore, the study also highlights the role of women in preserving, developing and presenting this heritage to the public in new formats.

Keywords

folklore, womens performance, traditional culture, modern creativity, oral creativity, folk oral art, female image, cultural heritage

The oral folk tradition is an invaluable treasure that embodies the cultural memory, historical experience, and aesthetic views of every nation.

In Uzbek folklore, women occupy a special place not only as transmitters of this heritage from generation to generation, but also as active creators who shape it. In traditional culture, women have fulfilled an important socio-spiritual function in society by performing songs, termalar (epic poems), ritual and seasonal folklore samples, legends, and fairy tales. Especially, women's performance of melodies and songs, and their role in rituals and customs, have ensured the continuity of folklore.

In Uzbekistan, supporting culture, art, and particularly women's participation in these fields is considered one of the key directions of state policy. In this regard, a number of legal foundations have been established to strengthen women's involvement in folk art and the preservation and development of cultural heritage. In particular, the Presidential decrees and resolutions adopted in recent years have laid the groundwork for significant changes in this area.

Presidential Decree No. PF-87, dated March 7, 2022, titled "On additional measures to support women and increase their social activity," provides for



encouraging women in the fields of culture and art, increasing their social participation, and allocating grants to women engaged in folk art, folklore, and traditional creative fields. This indicates state-level support for the activities of women involved in folklore performance.

Presidential Resolution No. PQ-4161, dated February 19, 2019, titled "On measures to improve the system of preservation, research, and promotion of the oral folk creativity of the Republic of Uzbekistan," provides for the systematic study, preservation, and promotion of all genres of folk art, including songs, lullabies, ritual traditions, and other oral folklore forms performed by women. The resolution outlines measures such as regional expeditions on folklore performance, publication of collections, and engaging the younger generation in this heritage.

Presidential Resolution No. PQ-4779, dated June 26, 2020, titled "On approval of the concept for the development of culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030," sets as a strategic goal the development of modern forms of folk creativity, including encouraging women's active participation in folklore ensembles, national pop art, and stage performance. This allows for the development of folklore performance not only in traditional but also in modern contexts.

The analysis of presidential decrees and resolutions shows that, within the framework of state policy, special attention is paid to women's participation in preserving and promoting national heritage. These documents not only recognize the role of women in folklore performance but also outline practical measures to encourage them, increase their social activity, and expand their participation in cultural processes. Thus, the topic is relevant, and covering it based on legal foundations is scientifically and practically necessary.

In the modern era, women's folklore performance is being manifested through new forms and means. The increasing participation of women in television programs, social media, folklore ensembles, and stage performances further emphasizes the relevance of this topic. Through their creative activity, not only is the national heritage being preserved, but it is also interpreted in a modern way within the global cultural environment [3].

Today, against the backdrop of urgent social issues such as gender equality, the restoration of cultural heritage, and support for women's activism, the scientific study of women's role in folklore performance is extremely important. This topic holds both practical and theoretical significance not only for cultural and folklore scholars but also for the wider public.

Although the issue of women's role in folklore performance has not been extensively studied as an independent topic in Uzbek folklore studies, it has been partially addressed in various scientific works. In particular, research on the



formation of folklore genres, performance traditions, ritual culture, women's poetics, and their roles in oral creativity are important sources in this regard [4].

In the works of academician Hodi Zarif, dedicated to the genre system and performance traditions of oral folklore, the issue of women's participation in folklore creativity is briefly mentioned. He notes that women appear as the main performers in ritual songs (for example, alla, sochqi songs, wedding-terma). In these genres, women's performance is considered important not only aesthetically but also functionally [5].

In the works written by Professor To'ra Mirzayev, the formation of the female image in Uzbek customs and rituals and their place in the socio-cultural environment is thoroughly analyzed. Research shows that women act not only as performers of folklore materials but also as subjects who preserve and develop them.

In modern studies, particularly in the articles and dissertations of G. G'ulomova and S. Abdullaeva, the role of women in folklore art is analyzed from gender and cultural perspectives. These works examine not only the traditional forms of female folklore performance but also their participation in modern stage appearances, folk ensembles, and their active role in promoting heritage through media [6].

Moreover, international studies—for example, the works of scholars such as Ruth Finnegan, Linda Dégh, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett on performance, oral culture, and gender issues—offer comparative perspectives for Uzbek folklore studies. These scholars emphasize that women are not just passive performers in folklore heritage but active social agents, which is a relevant approach for national research as well [7].

The analysis of the above-mentioned sources shows that the role of women in folklore performance is a broad and complex issue that remains a scientifically relevant problem requiring deep analysis based on traditional, modern, and gender perspectives. Therefore, a special analytical study of the role of women in folklore creativity provides an opportunity to reinterpret the phenomenon of women in our national culture [8].

It is necessary to expand comprehensive research on female performance—particularly the study of women's participation across folklore genres (such as ritual songs, termas, and verbal contests)—to fill existing gaps in this field [9].

Supporting women in the activities of folklore ensembles means creating modern conditions for female artists who showcase the people's creative heritage on stage and promoting their activities at the level of cultural policy.



Digitization and archiving of women's folklore—oral samples such as lullabies, wedding-terma, and songs performed by women—must be systematically collected and preserved in digital format.

Strengthening the gender approach in folklore studies—the use of modern gender theories to analyze women's social, aesthetic, and educational roles in folklore would be highly effective.

Integration into the education system—special attention should be given to the creative heritage of women within the framework of national folklore classes in schools and higher education institutions [10].

The role of women in folklore performance is not merely an aesthetic or creative issue, but a significant socio-cultural phenomenon tied to cultural memory, social activism, and the continuity of national heritage. In traditional society, women have been the most active carriers of oral creativity through rituals, songs, fairy tales, and epics.

Today, in the context of globalization, they not only preserve this heritage but also reinterpret it in new forms through mass media and cultural platforms.

The deep-rooted presence of the female image in folklore and its transformation in the modern context requires further in-depth study of this field and a revision of existing scientific approaches. Therefore, women should be viewed not merely as participants in folklore performance, but as powerful socio-cultural agents who contribute to the formation of national identity.

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