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Article

Assessment Of Sectoral And Regional Development Trends Of Individual Women's Entrepreneurship In Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article assesses the sectoral and regional development trends of individual women's entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan based on official statistical data for 2018-2024, identifies the causes of the identified imbalances and changes, and develops scientific proposals to improve the organizational and economic mechanism for managing women's entrepreneurship.

Keywords: women's entrepreneurship, sectoral and regional development trends, individual women entrepreneurs, Andijan region.

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1. Introduction

In the context of modernization of modern economic systems and achieving sustainable development goals, increasing women's economic activity is one of the issues of global importance [1]. Women's entrepreneurship is not only a means of creating new jobs and ensuring growth in gross domestic product, but also an important factor strengthening social stability in society. In recent years, attracting women to entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan, expanding their legal and organizational opportunities, has become one of the priority areas of state policy. The introduction of the "Women's Book" system and the establishment of a preferential lending system in our republic have created the organizational foundation of the management mechanism [2].

2. Literature Review and Methodology

The theoretical and methodological foundations of women's entrepreneurship management and development are being widely studied by international and domestic economists. In particular, Candida Brush[3] in her research substantiated that women's business requires a unique ecosystem that is closely linked to the macro- and meso-environment. Welter [4] further emphasizes that entrepreneurial activity is strongly shaped by the social, institutional, and spatial contexts in which it is embedded. Foreign scholars such as Sarah Carter[5] and Helena Ahl[6] analyzed institutional barriers to women's entrepreneurship management and restrictions on access to financial resources. Minniti and Naudé [7] examined cross-country patterns and determinants of female entrepreneurship, showing that institutional and socio-economic conditions largely explain international differences in women's entrepreneurial activity. Scholars from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries Yu.S. Pinkovetskaya[8], N.M. Rimashevskaya[9] and domestic scholars Sh.N. Mirzaeva[10] assessed the socio-economic characteristics of women's business, their place in the employment system, and state support mechanisms. International organizations such as the OECD [11] and the World Bank [12] also emphasize that gender-sensitive entrepreneurship policies and legal

environments are decisive for expanding women's participation in business. However, most of the existing theoretical and practical research is limited to studying women's entrepreneurship at the general macroeconomic level or based on qualitative indicators. The regional and sectoral characteristics of the mechanism for managing women's entrepreneurship have not been comprehensively and comparatively analyzed using long-term official statistical data.

Official data from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan show a sharp imbalance in the number of individual female entrepreneurs in the regions of Uzbekistan in 2018-2024. For example, during the study period, the number of individual female entrepreneurs in Andijan region increased by more than 15 times, while in Navoi region, which has great industrial potential and economic resources, on the contrary, a decrease in the number of female entrepreneurs was observed by 3%. The economic and organizational reasons, institutional factors, and weaknesses in the management system of these territorial and sectoral changes reflected in official statistics have not yet been resolved in economics and require in-depth empirical analysis.

The methodological basis of the study is a systematic approach, economic and statistical analysis, comparative evaluation and empirical modeling. In order to assess the effectiveness of the mechanism for managing women's entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan, methods of collecting, grouping and complex mathematical and statistical processing of official statistical data were used.

The information base for the empirical analysis was based on official reports and gender statistics data from the State Tax Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2018-2024.

The total number of women entrepreneurs officially registered with the state tax service and operating as individual entrepreneurs (a total sample across the republic ranging from 69,756 in 2018 to 121,324 in 2024) was taken as the object of the study.

3. Discussion and Results

Table 1.

Number of women entrepreneurs registered with the state tax service and operating as sole proprietors (persons) [13].

Regions/years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Republic of Uzbekistan	**69,756**	**75 295**	**81,703**	**85,634**	**99,307**	**102,802**	**121,324**
Republic of Karakalpakstan	4,795	5 114	5 432	5 178	6,081	6,902	9 228
Andijan region	673	763	5,302	5 545	6 335	6 681	10,363
Bukhara region	7,390	7,324	6 406	6,687	7,293	7 448	8,032
Jizzakh region	2,769	3,086	3 468	3,529	3,955	4,090	4 670
Kashkadarya region	5,913	7,015	7 351	7 667	8,917	9 214	10,574
Navoi region	3,796	2,885	2 520	2,946	3 305	3 294	3,684
Namangan region	2,684	3 277	3,981	4 131	4 748	4,938	5,816
Samarkand region	8,038	9 362	10,700	10,464	12,698	12,436	13,997
Surkhandarya region	5 271	5,377	5 445	5,906	6,913	6 662	7,906
Syrdarya region	2,077	2 472	2 390	2,535	3 133	3 273	3,698
Tashkent region	7 431	8 666	8 466	9 440	10,602	10,968	12,353
Fergana region	6,014	6,393	6 651	6,734	8,007	7,881	9 260
Khorezm region	5 468	6,051	5,946	5,923	7,074	6,968	7,823

Table 1 shows that the number of women entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan increased from 69,756 in 2018 to 121,324 in 2024, or 51,568 people, between 2018 and 2024. The highest figure was recorded in Andijan region, which increased from 673 in 2018 to 10,363 in 2024, or 9,690 people. At the same time, a decrease in the number of women entrepreneurs in Navoi region was observed from 3,796 in 2018 to 3,684 in 2024, or 112 people.

Table 2.

Regional dynamics and structural share of the number of individual female entrepreneurs registered with the State Tax Service (2018-2024) [14]

Regions	2018	2024	In 2024, its share in the republic is in %	Growth rate compared to 2018, in %
Republic of Uzbekistan	**69756**	**121324**	**100%**	**+73.9%**
Samarkand region	8038	13997	11.5%	+74.1%
Tashkent city	7437	13920	11.5%	87.2%
Tashkent region	7431	12353	10.2%	+66.2%
Kashkadarya region	5913	10574	8.7%	+78.8%
Andijan region	673	10363	8.5%	**+1439.8%**
Fergana region	6014	9260	7.6%	+54.0%
Republic of Karakalpakstan	4795	9228	7.6%	+92.5%
Bukhara region	7390	8032	6.6%	+8.7%
Surkhandarya region	5271	7906	6.5%	+50.0%
Khorezm region	5468	7823	6.4%	+43.1%
Namangan region	2684	5816	4.8%	+116.7%
Jizzakh region	2769	4670	3.8%	+68.7%
Syrdarya region	2077	3698	3.0%	+78.0%
Navoi region	3796	3684	3.0%	**-3.0%**

The results of the statistical analysis in Table 2 show that between 2018 and 2024, the number of women entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan increased by 73.9%, exceeding 121.3 thousand people. The highest share falls on Samarkand region with 11.5% and Tashkent city with 11.5%. The most phenomenal growth rate of women's entrepreneurship during the study period was observed in Andijan region, i.e. the indicator increased by more than 15 times, or by 1439.8%. At the same time, a decrease in the number of women entrepreneurs by 3% was observed in Navoi region, while the growth rate in Bukhara region was very slow, at 8.7%.

Table 3.

Number of women entrepreneurs registered with the state tax service and operating, by type of activity (persons) [15].

Indicators/ years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total	**69,756**	**75 295**	**81,703**	**85,634**	**99,307**	**102,802**	**121,324**
including by activity types:							
retailers	31510	34308	35877	39556	44710	46297	54118
craft activities according to the list established by law	15845	18207	20632	8060	11654	10050	10211
producers of consumer goods	11691	9759	11059	-	-	-	-
those working in the field of household services	3235	3717	4212	6736	7754	7335	10769
those engaged in other activities	7475	9304	9923	31282	35189	39120	46226
from this:							
residential and non-residential repair services for residents	35	22	25	12	14	70	64
those working in the transport sector	296	262	297	110	-	-	1435

The results of the statistical analysis in Table 3 show that the largest change was observed in the number of female individual entrepreneurs engaged in retail trade, from 31,510 people working in this sector in 2018 to 54,118 in 2024.people. At the same time, there are people engaged in handicraft activities.The number of female individual entrepreneurs was 15,845 in 2018, but in 2024 this figure is expected to decrease by 5,634, reaching 10,211.

Also, as a result of statistical analysis, it can be seen that the "manufacturing of consumer goods" sector has not been shown separately in official statistics since 2021, but has been included in "other activities", which in turn has led to a sharp increase in the numbers in this group.

Table 4

Sectoral structure and dynamics of the activities of individual female entrepreneurs registered with the state tax service (2018-2024) [16].

Types of activities	2018 (thousand people)	2024 (thousand people)	Share in 2024, in %	Growth rate compared to 2018, in %
Total (number of women in the NWO)	69.75	121.32	100%	+73.9%
retailers	31.51	54.12	44.6%	+71.7%
those working in the field of household services	3.23	10.77	8.9%	232.9%
craft activities according to the list established by law	15.84	10.21	8.4%	-35.5%
those working in the transport sector	0.30	1.43	1.2%	+384.8%
residential and non-residential repair services for residents	0.035	0.064	0.1%	+82.8%
*those engaged in other activities	19.16	46.22	38.1%	+141.1%

*Note: In order to ensure comparability in the analysis, the indicators for "other activities" and "manufacturers of consumer goods" in 2018 were combined by the author, since starting in 2021, these sectors have been grouped together.

An analysis of the sectoral structure of the activities of individual women entrepreneurs shows that in the period under study (2018-2024), the retail sector retained its absolute leadership in women's entrepreneurship, and in 2024 its share amounted to 44.6%. From the point of view of the organizational management mechanism, the highest growth dynamics were observed in the field of household services, where the number of employed women in this area increased by 3.3 times. The sharp increase in the number of women entrepreneurs in the trade and household services sectors is explained by the relative simplicity of management decisions in the economy and the speed of capital turnover. This is often the result of economic necessity and the factor of supporting the family budget.

In addition, although the number of women working in the transport sector is small, there has been a significant increase in this sector as well. It is worth noting that the number of women in the craft sector decreased by 35.5% as a negative trend. Until 2020, the number of women craftsmen grew steadily, but since 2021 it has decreased sharply. The reasons for this may be Covid 2019, taxes, or changes in the organizational and legal mechanism. For example, some types of crafts may be transferred to the category of “self-employed persons” and removed from the list of “Individual entrepreneurs”.

The trends identified through analysis of official statistical data indicate that the governance mechanism of women's entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan is strongly dependent on regional and sectoral factors. The two main changes identified in the study - a sharp increase in Andijan region and a decline in Navoi region - require a deeper discussion of the local characteristics of the governance system.

The economic situation in the Andijan region can be explained by two organizational factors. First, in the context of the high demographic density of the region and the traditional development of home labor (crafts, tailoring), the mechanism for formalizing small business projects has been very actively implemented by local government bodies. Second, the organizational - non-mahalla system of allocating subsidies and preferential loans has given a strong impetus to the legalization of

women's entrepreneurship in the Andijan region. On the contrary, the negative trend in the Navoi region is explained not by the weakness of the management mechanism, but by changes in the labor market. Since Navoi is a large industrial center, it is economically more attractive for women to work as employees in large enterprises with stable wages, a social package, and guaranteed working conditions. As a result, women are choosing stable employment over entrepreneurial risk, which has led to stagnation in the number of individual entrepreneurs.

The high share of retail trade in the sectoral distribution is fully consistent with the theory that women's business is adapted to less capital-intensive and fast-moving sectors. However, the decrease in handicrafts by 35.5% is a worrying trend and requires a review of the management mechanism in this sector, in particular, the coordination of tax administration with the system of transition to self-employment.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the empirical research conducted, the following scientific and practical conclusions were drawn:

1. Although the number of female entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan increased by 73.9% in 2018-2024, their management activities are still concentrated in the low-profit and highly competitive retail and consumer services sectors. The share of female management in industry and high-tech services remains low.
2. Although a general institutional mechanism for supporting women's entrepreneurship has been created in the country, its effectiveness varies significantly across regions. While incentive mechanisms are yielding positive results in regions such as Andijan region and Tashkent city, in regions such as Navoi and Bukhara, local labor market characteristics are not taken into account.

Recommendations for improving the management mechanism:

1. In large industrial regions such as Navoi, it is necessary to transition to a mechanism for training women not as ordinary retail sales assistants, but as managers of small organizations that provide outsourcing services to large industrial enterprises.
2. It is necessary to introduce projects to manage women's entrepreneurship not only as a means of "social employment", but also as an "economic driver". To this end, separate grant programs and innovation development centers should be established for women who choose industrial and production directions.
3. It is recommended to introduce a special digital management system in the databases of the State Tax Committee and the National Statistics Committee that would indicate not only the number of enterprises managed by women, but also their annual turnover, jobs created, and the duration of their economic life.

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