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### **SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF STUDENTS FROM RURAL AREAS IN THE CONDITIONS OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

*The article establishes that an important direction of gender policy is to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women from rural areas, including the realization of their human rights. Obviously, it's time for the development of appropriate organizational, educational, and socio-educational conditions for the social formation of student youth in a higher education institution, including girls from rural areas, which is a prerequisite for their successful socialization, observance of the rights to equal access to education, involvement in social activities, and formation as full participants in human relations.*

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The socio-economic crisis, the ongoing military conflict in eastern Ukraine, and the austerity measures adopted by the Government exacerbate the gender imbalance in society, leading to the feminization of poverty; the loss of women's jobs; the complication of access to medical, educational, and social services; the increase in cases of domestic and sexual violence, including those related to the military conflict; the strengthening of patriarchal gender stereotypes and the traditional distribution of social roles.

The 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62), the main global intergovernmental body devoted exclusively to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York from March 12 to 23 under the theme "Challenges and prospects for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in rural areas."

The Commission was established by the ECOSOC in 1946 with the mandate to prepare recommendations on the protection of women's rights in the political, economic, public, social, and educational spheres. The Commission is also responsible for monitoring, reviewing, and assessing progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly 2000 at all levels, as well as supporting gender mainstreaming. In addition, the Commission contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The 62nd session, held on International Women's Day, was another occasion to draw attention to the rights and activism of women in rural areas and a good opportunity for the UN system and its partners from government, parliament, civil society, and international organizations to jointly discuss this issue and commit to take action that will change women's lives for the better.

An important contribution to the development of a gender approach to the educational process was made by: N. Baidiuk, O. Voronina, T. Holovanova, T. Isaieva, O. Kikinedzhi, I. Klotsyna, V. Kravets, O. Petrenko, O. Raskazova, V. Sychova, L. Stoliarchuk, O. Tsokur, et al. A comprehensive study of the situation of women living in rural areas was carried out by I. Volosevych, T. Konoplytska, T. Kostiuchenko, T. Martseniuk. However, the aspect of socio-psychological adaptation of girls from rural areas to the new conditions of study in higher education institutions remained unattended.

The purpose of the article is to find out the content and tasks of socio-psychological support of students from rural areas in a higher education institution as one of the conditions for the introduction of a gender approach and gender equality in the educational process.

The state policy today is focused on creating equal opportunities for women and men, while it is carried out taking into account international documents signed by Ukraine. These are, in particular, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the 1945 Charter of the United Nations; the 1967 Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the 1950 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; the 1995 Beijing Declaration, and others.

Gender policy is based not only on international normative legal acts ratified by Ukraine but also is regulated by national normative legal acts on equality between women and men.

Over the years of independence, a number of strategic documents have been adopted that take into account the gender aspect: the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On approval of the action plan for the implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy for the period up to 2020”; the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On approval of the national action plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 ‘Women, Peace, Security’”; the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan for its implementation; the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for its implementation; the Concept of reforming public administration; the Ministry of Education and Science has developed a draft Strategy “Education: Gender Dimension 2020”; the National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1325 “Women, Peace, Security”, approved by the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2016, consolidates the actions of state institutions and society to intensify women’s participation in peacemaking, assistance, protection, and rehabilitation of victims of violence; in April 2017, the Government approved the Concept of the state social program for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period until 2021, developed by the Ministry of Social Policy.

On October 10, 2018, parliamentary hearings were held on the topic “Preventing and combating discrimination against women from vulnerable social groups” which is caused by the need to carry out effective parliamentary oversight, identify problematic aspects in the field of public relations to prevent and counteract discrimination against women from vulnerable social groups: women with disabilities, Roma women, women with HIV/AIDS, rural women, elderly women, IDP women, etc.; develop effective mechanisms for protecting the rights of women from vulnerable groups on the basis of the principle of equal rights of women and men and non-discrimination. Economic, social, and cultural rights are of particular importance to women from vulnerable social groups, as they disproportionately suffer from poverty, social, and cultural marginalization. This strengthens their subordination and restricts their exercise of any other right. As a result, women from vulnerable groups have unequal access to resources and services, less power in the political, economic, and social spheres.

An important direction of gender policy is to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women from rural areas, including the realization of their human rights.

This aspect is a key factor in achieving gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals: “Sustainable development cannot be achieved without gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The goal of the Agenda for Sustainable Development is to respect those rights of rural women and girls that are necessary to ensure their livelihood, well-being, and ability to adapt to new conditions, in particular the rights to: land and protection of property rights; food and nutrition of appropriate quality and quantity; a life free from all forms of violence, discrimination, and harmful practices; the highest possible standard of health, in particular sexual and reproductive health and rights to it; quality, affordable and accessible education throughout life [2].

By ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Ukraine, in particular, undertook to: take into account the special problems faced by women living in rural areas and the role they play in ensuring the economic well-being of their families, including their activities in non-monetary sectors of the economy; take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the Convention to women living in rural areas [3].

By ratifying the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements (1996), the Ukrainian state prioritized the comprehensive development of not only cities but also rural areas, and recognized the “special needs of women, children, and youth in stable, healthy, and safe living conditions” (Article 7). The document states: “The development of rural and urban areas is interdependent. In addition to improving living conditions in cities, we should also strive to provide adequate infrastructure, public services, and employment opportunities in rural areas in order to increase their attractiveness, create an integrated network of settlements and minimize migration of the population from rural areas to cities” (Article 6). It is also noted about ensuring the full participation of all women and men (including in rural areas) in the economic and political life of the state [3].

The Constitution of Ukraine (dated June 28, 1996) in Section II “Rights, Freedoms, and Duties of Man and Citizen” of Art. 24 guarantees citizens equal constitutional rights and freedoms, “there can be no privileges or restrictions on the grounds of race, color, political, religious, and other beliefs, gender, ethnic and social origin, property status, place of residence, language or other grounds.”

The Partnership Framework between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations (2018–2022) recognizes that women in rural areas are a population group that is often overlooked and excluded from development, recovery, and humanitarian activities. Therefore, the UN system identifies women in rural areas as one of the key target groups for its activities, and, building on the complementarity of mandates of various UN system entities, works to address the challenges faced by women in rural areas in Ukraine.

The urgency of ensuring equal opportunities for rural women stems both from the fact that one in three women in Ukraine lives in rural areas and from the results of statistical studies: 48 % of women living in rural areas do not have access to health services; 36 % of women in rural areas do not participate in decision-making in their communities; 67 % of women in rural areas do not have access to the Internet at home; the average monthly salary of women working in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and related industries is 85.5 % of the salary of men; 32 % do not have access to drinking water at home; 21 % of women in rural areas have a bank account; internally displaced women in rural areas face many problems: respectively, the employment rate among IDP women living in rural areas is 17 % lower than among women living in large urban areas; 36 % of IDP women in rural areas are household heads and mostly depend on pension (42 %) and social assistance (32 %) [4].

As the statistics above show, women and girls in rural areas face discrimination in access to decision-making processes, employment, health, education, and other basic services.

This is confirmed by the results of the “Comprehensive study of the situation of women living in rural areas” (2015), conducted by UNDP in Ukraine together with the Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights. The study addressed a wide range of issues, such as women’s contribution to rural development and the many challenges they face. In particular, the analysis covers such rights of women as participation in the process of working out community development plans; access to health care facilities and the use of social security programs; obtaining formal and non-formal education; access to public services and advisory services; creation of cooperatives; participation in all forms of collective activities; use of agricultural credits and loans, marketing systems; the right to adequate living conditions, in particular, to adequate housing, sanitary services, electricity and water supply [3].

The study results prove that the situation of women living in rural areas is much worse than that of rural men and urban dwellers in many of these areas, and that women living in rural areas suffer more from poverty and social exclusion than others.

At the same time, this issue shouldn’t be neglected by specialists of social institutions in the context of decentralization, in particular regarding access to social services for women from among the population who live or will live in amalgamated territorial communities in cases where these are rural-type communities: identification of persons in difficult life circumstances; identification of needs for social services; organization and provision of social services to those in need; counseling and informing community residents on the provision of all types of social assistance; receiving applications and necessary documents for assistance, etc.

After all, international analytical studies show that the empowerment of women and girls in rural areas and the observance of their human rights and gender equality is a factor not only in the well-being of individuals, families, and rural communities but also in overall economic efficiency, taking into account the significant percentage of women among agricultural workers in Ukraine.

Moreover, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women recommended that Ukraine improve infrastructure in rural areas and develop policies to combat poverty among women in rural areas to ensure their access to justice, education, housing, formal employment, development of skills and learning opportunities, income generation and microcredit opportunities, land ownership and use, taking into account their special needs and with particular attention to the negative impact of the conflict on women in rural areas [4].

At the same time, the Committee recommended that women be treated not only as victims or beneficiaries but also as active participants in the development and implementation of such policies. Overall, rural women are given a critical role globally in supporting and improving rural livelihoods, as well as strengthening rural communities.

Undoubtedly, one of the prerequisites for achieving the above is to ensure access, both physical and economic, for all women and girls living in rural areas, including persons with disabilities, to complete general education and higher education in particular.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2015 is a global study of the countries of the world in terms of gender equality according to the World Economic Forum which determines the gender gap index and is measured by four key areas. Along with economic participation and career opportunities, health and survival, political rights and opportunities, a separate place is given to education [5].

It should be noted as a positive trend that the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine returned benefits to rural entrants. Therefore, since 2017, the so-called regional, sectoral, and rural coefficients have been introduced. This means that the competitive score is multiplied by the coefficient, and: the rural coefficient is 1.02 for persons registered in villages for at least two

years before the date of completion of applying for admission and who have received complete general secondary education in educational institutions located in the villages in the year of admission and 1.00 in other cases.

This innovation is quite justified in relation to rural children: in rural schools, there are less opportunities for self-education of pedagogical workers, a weak material base, and parents are economically less capable. Therefore, this is quite fair compensation by the state of unequal opportunities for children.

Obviously, it's time for the development of appropriate organizational, educational, and socio-educational conditions for the social formation of student youth in a higher education institution, including girls from rural areas.

For this purpose, it is advisable to find out the situation of urban and rural school graduates according to various indicators: conditions of study, content and orientation of extracurricular life, leadership qualities, leisure activities, the formation of a healthy lifestyle, features of family education, facts of discrimination on the basis of gender and violence, living conditions, etc.

At the same time, this will allow to join the implementation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations set out in the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. This document defines specific measures aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women until 2021. In particular, it provides for: training on the observance of women's rights and the inclusion of a gender component in educational standards for the training of specialists; strengthening the institutional mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men; conducting an information campaign to raise legal awareness of women's rights; improving access of girls and women to medical, educational, legal, and social services. The implementation of these measures will contribute to overcoming all forms of discrimination against women and girls, reducing the level of gender-based and domestic violence, preventing its manifestations and timely assistance to victims, empowering women economically, ensuring equal access to justice, participation in decision-making in political and public life, etc.

It should be emphasized that among the recommendations set forth in the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women there were: par. 19. Raising women's awareness of their rights and the remedies available to them to assert their violated rights under the Convention, ensuring that information on the Convention, the Optional Protocol, and the UN Committee's General Recommendations is made available to all women, in particular rural women. 47. Ensuring international assistance and cooperation, as appropriate, to improve rural infrastructure and formulate policies to combat poverty among women in rural areas in order to ensure their access to justice, education, housing, employment in the formal sector, skills development and training opportunities.

It is the creation of favorable social and educational conditions for students from rural areas in a higher education institution and taking into account their situation that are prerequisites for successful socialization, respect for the rights to equal access to education, involvement in social activities, the formation of full participants in human relations.

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