

GENDER STEREOTYPES REGARDING WOMEN IN THE LEGAL SPHERE: ISSUES AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THEM

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Annotation. Equality is the foundation of a democratic society that strives for social justice and respect for human rights. Unfortunately, due to various circumstances, women are discriminated against in almost all spheres of life. The relevance of the scientific article is due to the fact that, despite Ukraine's recognition of basic international documents in the field of ensuring gender equality, the establishment of the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of gender at the constitutional level, the adoption of a special law on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, the creation of appropriate institutional guarantees in this area, the problem of insufficiently effective protection of women and observance of gender equality in various spheres of public life remains open for our state. Gender stereotypes represent a significant issue in contemporary society, particularly within professional environments such as the legal sphere. Women working in this field often encounter certain stereotypes that may limit their opportunities for professional advancement and development. These stereotypes may include the perception that women are less competent in the legal domain or that they are better suited for other types of professional activities.

It is important to consider that gender stereotypes can affect women's self-esteem in the legal sphere, as well as their ability to advocate for their rights and interests. This may lead to women feeling less confident in their abilities, which in turn can restrict their career trajectory.

To address this issue, it is necessary to pay attention to gender equality issues in the legal sphere. This may involve conducting campaigns to educate and raise awareness about gender stereotypes, as well as promoting the development and support of female leaders in this field. Additionally, it is important to create conditions for women to have equal opportunities for professional growth, including access to education and training in the field of law.

Key words: stereotypes, women, gender stereotypes, negative impact, legal sphere.

1. The purpose of this article is to analyze the issues and explore solutions to gender stereotypes regarding women in the legal sphere.

2. Presentation of the main material.

The legal sphere, traditionally perceived as dominated by men, has undergone significant changes in recent decades. Women are increasingly involved in various legal professions, breaking down gender stereotypes and advocating for equal opportunities.

However, despite considerable progress, gender stereotypes regarding women in the legal sphere remain prevalent. This phenomenon not only negatively impacts women's career prospects but also the overall effectiveness of the legal system.

Persistent stereotypes about which societal roles are better suited for women often hinder their professional advancement in the legal sphere. For instance, the notion that women are more

suitable for caretaking roles may result in them predominantly occupying certain positions, while opportunities for career growth in other legal fields may be limited. This perception may also lead to the general belief in the limited competence of women in the legal sphere, especially in challenging and high-status professions traditionally seen as “male-dominated.” [1].

If left unaddressed and uncorrected, such stereotypes can become obstacles for women aspiring to develop in the legal sphere. They may experience psychological pressure and insecurity about their abilities, as well as encounter difficulties in their relationships with colleagues and leadership. This may lead women to abandon their career ambitions or refrain from actively pursuing higher positions in the legal sphere [1].

The notion that women are less capable of addressing complex legal issues compared to men is a stereotype that complicates their professional standing in the legal sphere. This stereotype may result in women being offered fewer opportunities to participate in important cases and may lead to the perception of their competence as limited. These perceptions may arise from the stereotypical belief that women are less capable of restraint and analytical thinking, necessary for resolving complex legal matters.

This stereotype complicates women’s career advancement in the legal sphere, as it may lead to limitations on their opportunities to handle significant cases. It may also affect women’s self-esteem and how they are perceived by colleagues and leadership, potentially leading to a loss of confidence and low motivation for professional development.

It is also important to note that there may be a stereotype in the legal sphere regarding the role of women in conflict resolution. Women are often perceived as less aggressive and more conflict-averse. This may result in women in the legal sphere being offered fewer opportunities to participate in complex and important cases, as well as the perception of their competence as limited.

The stereotype of “softness” and “emotionality” of women is often used to limit their opportunities and treat them with a certain degree of mistrust in various areas of life. This stereotype emphasizes existing societal perceptions of gender roles, where women are attributed a more emotional character compared to men, who are considered to exhibit more rational and logical behavior. This may lead to underestimation of women’s abilities in areas requiring logical thinking and making important decisions, such as legal matters [2, c. 23].

This stereotype can also affect women’s self-assessment, encouraging them to feel less competent in areas requiring rational thinking. At the same time, this bias can influence attitudes towards the female representative group as a whole, creating certain obstacles for their professional and personal development. To overcome this stereotype, it is necessary to actively work on changing perceptions of gender roles and support equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life.

The stereotype of “insufficient authority” of women in managerial positions can be harmful and limit women’s opportunities in areas requiring influence and decisiveness, such as law enforcement or the judiciary. This stereotype is based on perceptions of gender roles, where women are perceived to possess softer and calmer qualities, making them less suitable for leadership positions requiring a firm approach and decisiveness in problem-solving [3].

However, this stereotype fails to consider the individual characteristics and professional qualities of each woman. Many women successfully work in fields requiring authority and decisiveness, demonstrating their competence and effectiveness in performing duties. It is important to realize that authority and leadership qualities are not exclusively male attributes but can be equally inherent in women.

To overcome this stereotype, it is important to create conditions for the development and support of leadership qualities in women, as well as to highlight their successful work in relevant fields. It is also crucial to abandon notions of gender roles and consider each individual based on their professional abilities and achievements rather than gender stereotypes.

The stereotype of “career-family incompatibility” puts additional pressure on women and presents them with a choice between professional growth and family responsibilities. This stereotype is based

on traditional perceptions of gender roles, where a woman is considered the primary homemaker and mother, who should focus more on raising children and supporting the family. However, this notion complicates the possibility for women to succeed in their careers and realize their potential in the legal sphere [4, c. 142].

The “glass ceiling” in the legal sphere underscores the problem of bias and unequal opportunities for women in attaining leadership positions. This stereotype entails that women face challenges in advancing up the career ladder due to the implicit barriers and prejudices existing in society. Women may encounter obstacles such as lesser support, limited opportunities for development and growth in the professional environment.

To overcome these stereotypes, it is necessary to work on changing perceptions of gender roles and creating conditions for women’s career development in the legal sphere. It is important to support a balance between family responsibilities and professional growth, as well as actively counteract bias and discrimination in the workplace.

Gender stereotypes have serious consequences for women in the legal sphere. One of the main problems is the low representation of women in leadership positions. This is reflected in the sparse selection of women for leadership roles in courts, prosecution, police, and the legal profession, leading to the absence of a female voice and perspectives in important decisions and strategies in the legal field [5, p. 113].

Another consequence is wage discrimination. Women in the legal sphere often face receiving lower salaries than men in similar positions, even if they have the same qualifications and work experience. This practice is unfair and discriminatory, as every worker, regardless of gender, should have the right to equal pay for equal work.

An additional consequence of gender stereotypes is the limitation of opportunities for professional development for women in the legal sphere. Prejudice and limitations created by these stereotypes can lead to feelings of insecurity and loss of motivation among women to achieve high goals in their careers. To overcome these consequences, it is necessary to actively work on changing perceptions of gender roles and ensuring equal opportunities for all employees in the legal field.

Gender stereotypes can significantly impact the self-esteem of women working in the legal sphere. This can lead to underestimating their abilities and loss of motivation for professional development. Women may feel less competent or incapable due to societal stereotypes about their abilities and potential, complicating their career growth and advancement in the legal field [6, p. 223].

The negative impact of gender stereotypes can also affect the effectiveness of the legal system as a whole. Gender inequality in the legal sphere can lead to unjust court decisions and inadequate regulation of legal relations. This can violate the principles of justice and the effectiveness of justice, making the legal system less fair and accessible to all citizens.

To address these problems, it is necessary to actively work on eliminating gender stereotypes in society and creating a favorable environment for the development and professional growth of women in the legal sphere. It is important to support women in their careers, provide them with opportunities for self-realization, and create equal conditions for all employees in the legal system.

To address the problems associated with gender stereotypes in the legal sphere, comprehensive measures are necessary. First and foremost, it is important to raise public awareness of gender equality issues and overcome stereotypes. Information campaigns, training, and explanatory activities can help raise awareness of the harmful effects of stereotypes and promote the construction of more equal and just relations in the legal field [7, p. 301].

One effective tool for ensuring greater representation of women in leadership is the use of quotas. Introducing quotas for leadership positions can stimulate an increase in the number of women holding key positions in the legal sphere. This can help shift entrenched stereotypes and promote more equal gender representation in leadership, which, in turn, can lead to improved gender equality and the effectiveness of the legal system as a whole.

It is also important to create mentoring and support programs for women who aspire to pursue a career in this field. This will help them find the right path in professional development and overcome possible obstacles arising from gender stereotypes.

It is important to conduct educational activities and training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and law enforcement officers on gender equality issues and stereotypes. This will help improve their awareness and understanding of the problem and contribute to creating a more friendly and equal environment in the legal sphere [8, p. 133].

Finally, it is important to work on changing the cultural environment permeated by gender stereotypes. This includes creating a positive and supportive environment for all employees of the legal system, regardless of their gender. Such changes can be a significant step towards building a more just and equal society.

Overall, it is important to recognize that overcoming gender stereotypes requires systematic work at the societal, legal system, and institutional levels. Only through joint efforts can significant changes be achieved in this area and build a more just and equal society for all its members.

3. Conclusions.

Gender stereotypes regarding women in the legal sphere are a serious problem that requires immediate regulation and changes in societal perceptions and practices. These stereotypes not only limit women's opportunities in a professional capacity but also affect their self-esteem and overall status in society. Overcoming these problems requires comprehensive measures aimed at strengthening gender equality and creating a favorable environment for all participants in the legal sphere.

First and foremost, it is important to conduct systematic campaigns on education and awareness about the harmfulness of gender stereotypes and their impact on society. These campaigns should incorporate various forms of informational activities to achieve maximum audience coverage. Additionally, it is crucial to support female leaders in the legal sphere and promote their professional development.

Furthermore, it is necessary to implement policies aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in the legal sphere. This may include measures to stimulate female participation in decision-making, increase the representation of women in higher positions, and ensure equal working conditions for all employees.

Overall, overcoming gender stereotypes in the legal sphere requires a comprehensive approach and joint efforts from society, the state, and professional associations. Only through this can equal conditions for the development and professional growth of all participants be ensured, regardless of gender.

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