



## **International Conference on Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Information Systems**

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### **NATIONAL MENTALITY AND GENDERED PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS: THE ROLE OF CULTURAL VALUES IN SHAPING WOMEN'S AND MEN'S LIFE CHOICES**

Hamzayeva Zebo Murodjon qizi

Teacher of the Department of Russian Language and Literature University of Economics and Pedagogy

E-mail: [z.m.hamzayeva@ipu-edu.uz](mailto:z.m.hamzayeva@ipu-edu.uz)

#### **Abstract**

This article examines the role of national mentality in shaping the personal aspirations of women and men. National mentality, as a system of historically formed cultural values, moral norms, traditions, and social expectations, has a significant influence on an individual's life choices, ambitions, and self-realization. The study focuses on how gender roles are constructed within national-cultural consciousness and how these roles affect the aspirations of women and men in family, education, career, social activity, and personal development. The article argues that while national mentality can serve as a source of moral stability, cultural identity, and social belonging, it may also create limitations when traditional expectations restrict individual freedom.

**Keywords:** national mentality, gender roles, personal aspiration, women, men, cultural values, social expectations, identity, self-realization, tradition and modernity.



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### Introduction

The issue of personal aspiration has always been closely connected with the cultural, moral, and social environment in which a person lives. Every individual forms dreams, ambitions, and life goals not in isolation, but within a certain system of values. This system is shaped by family, society, tradition, education, religion, historical memory, and national mentality. National mentality reflects the collective worldview of a people; it includes moral standards, behavioral norms, emotional attitudes, gender expectations, and ideas about dignity, honor, responsibility, and success. In the personal aspirations of women and men, national mentality plays a particularly important role. It determines what society expects from a woman and what it expects from a man. In many traditional cultures, including Eastern societies, women are often associated with patience, modesty, family devotion, and moral purity. Men, in turn, are expected to be strong, responsible, economically active, protective, and socially successful. These expectations influence how women and men imagine their future, choose professions, build family relations, and define their place in society.

However, modern life has changed the traditional understanding of gender roles. Education, urbanization, globalization, professional development, and social mobility have expanded the possibilities for both women and men. Today, women increasingly aspire to education, career growth, intellectual independence, and social participation, while men also face new expectations related to emotional openness, family partnership, and moral responsibility. Therefore, the relationship between national mentality and gendered personal aspiration has become a complex and relevant topic.



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### **1. The Concept of National Mentality and Its Social Function**

National mentality can be understood as a historically formed mode of thinking, feeling, and behaving that characterizes a particular nation or cultural community. It is not limited to customs or traditions; rather, it includes deep moral principles, collective memory, attitudes toward family, gender, labor, honor, education, and social relations. The social function of national mentality is twofold. On the one hand, it preserves cultural continuity and moral stability. It teaches individuals to respect family values, social responsibility, national identity, and ethical norms. On the other hand, national mentality may also become restrictive when it turns into rigid stereotypes that limit personal freedom.

For women and men, national mentality often provides different models of behavior. A woman may be encouraged to be patient, caring, modest, and family-oriented. A man may be encouraged to be strong, ambitious, financially responsible, and socially active. These models are not necessarily negative; they can create moral discipline and social harmony. However, problems arise when these expectations prevent individuals from developing their talents or choosing their own life path.

### **2. Women's Personal Aspirations and National Mentality**

In many national-cultural traditions, the personal aspirations of women have historically been connected with family, motherhood, loyalty, and moral beauty. A woman's value was often measured by her ability to preserve family harmony, demonstrate patience, and maintain moral purity. Such expectations formed a strong ethical image of womanhood. At the same time, these ideals sometimes limited women's individual aspirations. A woman's desire for education, professional growth, creative expression, or social participation could be seen as



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secondary to her family duties. In traditional environments, women were often expected to sacrifice their personal ambitions for the sake of family reputation, social approval, or cultural norms.

Literature frequently reflects this contradiction. Female characters in many works are portrayed as morally strong and spiritually rich, yet their personal desires are restricted by social expectations. Their tragedy often arises not from personal weakness, but from the conflict between inner aspiration and external pressure. This is especially visible in literary images of women who seek love, dignity, freedom, education, or self-expression but face the limitations imposed by family, society, or national customs. In modern society, the image of women's aspiration has changed significantly. Women now seek not only family happiness but also intellectual development, career achievement, creative independence, and social recognition. This does not mean that national values are rejected. Rather, women attempt to combine national morality with modern self-realization. A modern woman may remain faithful to cultural values while also pursuing education, leadership, professional success, and personal freedom.

### **3. Men's Personal Aspirations and National Mentality**

National mentality also plays an important role in shaping men's personal aspirations. In many societies, masculinity is associated with strength, responsibility, courage, leadership, and economic power. From childhood, boys may be taught that they must become protectors, providers, and decision-makers. These expectations influence their education, career choices, emotional behavior, and social ambitions.

For men, national mentality often creates a strong motivation for achievement. The desire to support the family, gain respect, become socially useful, and protect



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national values may encourage men to work hard and develop a sense of responsibility. In this sense, cultural expectations can serve as a positive force. However, the traditional model of masculinity may also create psychological pressure. Men may feel that they must always appear strong, successful, emotionally restrained, and dominant. Failure in career, financial instability, or inability to meet social expectations may lead to inner conflict, anxiety, or loss of self-confidence. Thus, men's aspirations are also shaped by both the supportive and restrictive sides of national mentality. Modern society requires a broader understanding of male aspiration. Today, men are not only expected to be economically successful but also emotionally mature, morally responsible, intellectually developed, and capable of equal partnership in family life. This shows that national mentality is gradually transforming. The traditional image of man as only a provider is being replaced by a more complex image of man as a responsible, sensitive, educated, and socially conscious person.

### **4. Gender Roles, Family Expectations, and Personal Choice**

Family is one of the main institutions through which national mentality influences personal aspirations. In many cultures, the family teaches children what is appropriate for girls and boys, what kind of future is desirable, and what kind of behavior is socially approved. Through family upbringing, gender roles become part of personal identity. For girls, family expectations may emphasize modesty, responsibility, respect for elders, and preparation for marriage. For boys, expectations may emphasize independence, strength, career orientation, and responsibility for others. These expectations influence how young people understand success and happiness. However, personal choice may not always coincide with family or social expectations. A woman may wish to prioritize



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education or career before marriage. A man may choose a creative profession instead of a socially prestigious or financially stable occupation. In such cases, the individual faces a conflict between personal aspiration and national-cultural expectation.

The most productive solution is not the rejection of national mentality, but its humanistic reinterpretation. National values should support human dignity, justice, education, moral growth, and social harmony. They should not suppress individuality. When national mentality is understood as a source of ethical strength rather than as a system of rigid restrictions, it can help both women and men develop harmoniously.

### **5. Tradition and Modernity in Gendered Self-Realization**

The relationship between tradition and modernity is one of the central issues in the study of national mentality. Tradition gives people identity, continuity, and moral orientation. Modernity gives individuals new opportunities, freedom of choice, and wider social participation. The personal aspirations of women and men are formed at the intersection of these two forces. For women, modernity creates opportunities for education, professional achievement, and independent thinking. For men, it creates new models of emotional, intellectual, and social development. Yet both women and men continue to live within the moral framework of national culture. Therefore, their aspirations are not purely individual; they are shaped by the dialogue between personal desire and cultural expectation.

In contemporary literary and social discourse, the ideal person is not someone who rejects national mentality, but someone who can critically understand it. A woman's aspiration should not be limited only to family service, just as a man's



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aspiration should not be reduced only to material success. Both should have the right to spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

### **6. Literary Representation of Women's and Men's Aspirations**

Literature plays a significant role in revealing how national mentality influences the aspirations of women and men. Through literary characters, writers show the conflict between personal desire and social expectation. Female characters often embody the struggle for dignity, love, education, and self-expression. Male characters often represent the tension between duty, honor, ambition, and moral responsibility. In Uzbek literature, female characters frequently reveal the contradictions between national traditions and personal freedom. Their inner world reflects the social and moral pressures placed upon women. At the same time, male characters often demonstrate the burden of responsibility imposed by family and society. In both cases, national mentality becomes a determining force in shaping character and destiny. In English literature, similar issues are often presented through the conflict between individual freedom and social norms. Women's aspirations may be restricted by class, gender, morality, or family expectations, while men also struggle with social ambition, moral duty, and personal identity. Therefore, the issue of national mentality and gendered aspiration is not limited to one culture; it is a universal literary and social problem.

### **Conclusion**

National mentality plays a vital role in shaping the personal aspirations of women and men. It influences how individuals understand success, dignity, family, responsibility, love, education, and self-realization. For women, national mentality often emphasizes modesty, patience, family devotion, and moral purity.



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For men, it emphasizes responsibility, strength, leadership, and social achievement. These values may provide moral guidance and cultural identity, but they may also become restrictive when interpreted through rigid gender stereotypes. The analysis shows that both women and men experience the influence of national mentality in different but equally significant ways. Women may face limitations in pursuing education, career, or independence, while men may face pressure to be constantly successful, strong, and emotionally restrained. Therefore, the problem is not national mentality itself, but its narrow and unequal interpretation. A modern and humanistic understanding of national mentality should allow both women and men to develop their personal aspirations freely while preserving moral and cultural identity. True national values should not suppress human potential; they should support dignity, justice, education, mutual respect, and spiritual growth.

In conclusion, the role of national mentality in women's and men's personal aspirations is a complex cultural phenomenon. It reflects the relationship between tradition and modernity, society and individual, gender and identity. A balanced approach to this issue can help create a social environment in which both women and men are able to realize their potential without losing their national and moral roots.

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