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# Socio-Criminological Analysis of Female Criminality and Drug Addiction: Global and National Dimensions

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**Abstract:** This article presents a socio-criminological analysis of female criminality and drug addiction from both global and national perspectives. Based on the 2024 reports of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women, the paper examines the growing rate of drug use among women, their involvement in drug trafficking networks, and the influence of gender-related factors on criminal behavior. The study identifies major criminogenic causes such as social inequality, economic vulnerability, domestic violence, and psychological pressure. It also reviews theoretical approaches of international scholars and legal frameworks, including the 1988 UN Vienna Convention and the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The author proposes scientifically grounded recommendations to improve gender-sensitive prevention and rehabilitation strategies, establish specialized centers for women, and enhance the system of social protection to reduce female drug-related crimes.

**Keywords:** Female Criminality, Drug Addiction, Criminological Analysis, Drug Trafficking, Gender Inequality, Prevention, Rehabilitation, International Conventions, Social Security

## 1. Introduction

According to the 2024 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the number of drug users worldwide has exceeded 292 million, and one in every four of them is a woman [1]. This figure not only demonstrates the expanding scale of drug addiction but also clearly reveals its social consequences in terms of gender. The growing tendency toward drug use among women has become a serious challenge for healthcare systems, as their access to medical and rehabilitation services remains limited, putting their health, social activity, and family stability at serious risk [2].

In today's global context, drug addiction is increasingly seen as a new and dangerous manifestation of female criminality. In many parts of the world, women are being forced into the drug trafficking chain, being used as couriers, distributors, or assistants. As noted in the 2024 reports of UNODC and UN Women, more than 60 percent of victims of human trafficking and illegal exploitation are women and girls [3]. These figures show that women are being used as the "socially vulnerable link" within the drug trafficking and criminal system.

This situation raises serious concerns not only from a human rights perspective but also from a criminological standpoint. The involvement of women in drug addiction is closely linked to factors such as social inequality, economic hardship, domestic violence, and psychological depression, all of which contribute to the emergence of new forms of crime. Therefore, analyzing the issue of female criminality and drug addiction in a

comprehensive manner across social, legal, and psycho-criminological dimensions is one of the most pressing tasks of today.

At this point, it is important to address the criminological characteristics of drug-related crimes committed by women. Nowadays, these crimes are determined by a number of interrelated factors. Above all, social and economic difficulties, family conflicts and violence, unemployment, and lack of social protection play a decisive role in their commission. According to criminologist *V.N. Kudryavtsev*, certain types of crime are shaped under the influence of gender factors, and for women, social vulnerability and psychological pressure emerge as the main criminogenic conditions [4].

Moreover, women often become involved in drug trafficking not by independent decision but under pressure from their spouses, close relatives, or criminal groups. For instance, *A.I. Dolgova* notes that women are drawn into criminal activity mainly due to external environmental influences, economic need, and domestic violence within family relationships [5].

Criminological studies show that drug-related crimes among women are frequently committed under the influence of psychological pressure, depression, stress, and social isolation. The 2024 UNODC report highlights that women often appear as a socially vulnerable group in both drug consumption and distribution processes, while their access to rehabilitation services remains significantly limited [6].

## 2. Materials and Methods

The Another important feature is that women generally participate in drug trafficking as couriers, transporters, or assistants. This is explained by their socio-economic vulnerability, which makes them more susceptible to being drawn into criminal activity. Furthermore, the risk of recidivism among women remains high, as access to treatment and rehabilitation services is often restricted [7].

As noted in the 2024 reports of UNODC and UN Women, many women participate in drug trafficking not by their own free will but under pressure from their spouses or criminal groups. Therefore, it is necessary to assess them as "victim-offenders" [8].

From this perspective, the criminological characteristics of drug-related crimes committed by women may reasonably include the following:

- Social and economic vulnerability and deprivation;
- Domestic violence and external pressure;
- Psychological and emotional distress and stress;
- Participation in drug trafficking in subordinate or vulnerable roles;
- A high risk of recidivism.

Moreover, the criminological nature of these crimes indicates that combating them requires not only punitive measures but also the application of comprehensive social, psychological, and economic support mechanisms, along with preventive strategies.

At this point, the analysis of female criminality has emerged as an important scientific direction in both international and national criminology. Scholars from various countries have advanced different theories, all of which share the view that women's involvement in crime is primarily determined by social, economic, and cultural factors.

## 3. Results and Discussion

For example, according to U.S. legal scholar *M. Tonry's* theory, women are mainly drawn into crime under the influence of "social inequality and economic vulnerability." He identifies factors such as labor market inequality, unemployment, and poverty as key causes. Therefore, Tonry emphasizes that in addressing female criminality, expanding social guarantees and economic opportunities is more important than relying solely on punitive measures [9].

American criminologist *F. Adler*, in her work Sisters in Crime, links female criminality to processes of social equality. In her view, as women achieve greater equality

in rights and opportunities with men, their rate of participation in crime may also increase [10].

Russian scholar *N.F. Kuznetsova* associates female criminality primarily with the family environment and insufficient social control. In her opinion, women are more likely to become involved in crime due to domestic violence, marital problems, and the influence of their social surroundings. Therefore, she proposes strengthening systems of psychological and legal support for women as a preventive measure [11].

Psychologist and legal theorist Carol Gilligan, who works at the intersection of psychology and law, in her book In a Different Voice, argues that women's moral and legal decision-making processes differ from those of men. According to her theory, women tend to make decisions based on "connection, responsibility, and care," which also shapes their attitudes toward criminal behavior [12].

Russian scholar *A.S. Zanin* has emphasized the importance of gender factors in issues of social security and legal protection. In his view, although systems of social insurance and state guarantees are often designed in a "gender-neutral" manner, women tend to benefit less from these systems in practice due to their limited access and opportunities. Therefore, he stresses the need to include additional guarantees and privileges for women within social and legal policy frameworks [13].

German criminologist *K. Schneider* explains female criminality through the "socialization theory." According to him, because society assigns women secondary social roles, they are often left outside legal and social protection mechanisms, which in turn increases their vulnerability to criminal involvement [14].

Among national scholars, *I. Ismoilov* has studied female criminality from a preventive perspective and emphasizes that applying a gender-sensitive approach in the activities of law enforcement agencies can effectively contribute to crime prevention. He argues that when developing prevention programs, it is essential to consider the social status and specific needs of women [15].

Moreover, special reports by UNESCO and the United Nations note that women's involvement in crime often occurs as a result of being victims of violence, human trafficking, or drug-related exploitation. This reality requires international organizations to encourage states to pursue gender-sensitive policies and implement specialized rehabilitation programs [16].

The theoretical views of the above-mentioned scholars and international organizations indicate that analyzing female criminality should not be limited to legal aspects alone. In this process, social inequality, economic hardship, cultural stereotypes, and family environment emerge as the main factors. The general conclusion from scientific and theoretical perspectives is that the fight against crime must prioritize a gender-sensitive approach as a key direction of state policy and law enforcement practice.

Furthermore, when reviewing international and national legislation, it becomes clear that combating drug addiction is recognized as a universal problem worldwide, and the international community has developed a coherent legal framework in this field. In particular, the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, adopted in Vienna on December 20, obliges states not only to implement criminal law measures but also to carry out prevention and rehabilitation programs that take gender-specific needs into account [17]. Through this, international legal norms emphasize the importance of considering women's socio-psychological conditions in combating drug abuse.

The experience of the European Union countries also plays a significant role in this direction. For example, in Germany, France, and Italy, special rehabilitation centers for women have been established, offering not only medical treatment but also legal counseling, psychological support, and social reintegration services [18]. This practice demonstrates that a comprehensive approach is effective in eliminating the criminogenic factors of drug-related crimes among women.

Uzbekistan's legislation also provides a solid legal basis in this area. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan *"On Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances"*, adopted on August 19, 2000, assigns state authorities the responsibility to combat the illicit circulation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as to organize preventive and social rehabilitation measures [19]. Moreover, the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Articles 270–275) establishes liability for crimes related to narcotic substances and reinforces the legal framework for law enforcement agencies in preventing such offenses [20].

However, experts have noted that gender-sensitive approaches in national practice remain insufficiently developed. For instance, specialized rehabilitation centers for women are limited, and existing programs often provide psychological and social support only in a general, non-targeted manner. This situation hinders the complete elimination of drug-related crimes committed by women [21].

Therefore, the analysis of international and national legal frameworks shows that to effectively combat drug-related crimes among women, it is necessary to integrate gender factors into the preventive and rehabilitation measures established by law. Such an approach not only ensures the legal protection of women but also contributes to their reintegration into social life and the reduction of recidivism risk.

An analysis of international and national legal frameworks shows that states face two key challenges in combating drug abuse. These are:

firstly, to fight decisively against the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances through criminal law measures;

secondly, to effectively organize prevention and rehabilitation programs aimed at protecting women and vulnerable social groups from criminal behavior [22].

In this regard, the 1988 UN Convention obliges states to implement prevention and rehabilitation programs that take gender factors into account, thereby establishing the international legal foundation for such measures [23]. In the practice of the European Union countries, specialized rehabilitation centers for women have been established, providing effective systems of legal, psychological, and social assistance [24].

Today, it is no secret that significant legal foundations have also been created in the legislation of New Uzbekistan in this area. In particular, the Law "On Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances" adopted in 2000 establishes prevention and social rehabilitation as a legal basis. In addition, Articles 270–275 of the Criminal Code prescribe liability for crimes related to narcotic substances. However, in practice, experts note that gender-sensitive approaches in working with women are still insufficiently implemented [25].

Based on the above scientific analysis, it is considered necessary to implement a number of reforms to prevent drug-related crimes committed by women. These include:

***Firstly,*** improving the national legal framework, in particular by taking gender factors into account in criminal law measures and orienting penal policy toward humanity and rehabilitation. In addition, harmonizing Uzbekistan's legislation with the 1988 UN Vienna Convention and the practices of the European Union will strengthen legal guarantees in combating female criminality.

***Secondly,*** gender-sensitive prevention programs should be introduced into practice. This involves early identification of women belonging to risk groups and conducting individual work with them in cooperation with mahalla committees, women's councils, and prevention inspectors. Broadly informing the public through mass media about the social consequences of women's criminality is also an important preventive mechanism.

***Thirdly,*** specialized rehabilitation and social reintegration centers for women should be established. These centers should combine medical treatment, psychological assistance, legal counseling, and vocational training to ensure successful reintegration of women into society. Foreign experience, including that of the EU countries, can serve as an effective model for national practice in this regard.

***Fourthly,*** economic protection and social support measures are of special significance. Providing state grants, microcredits, and vocational training courses will facilitate the entry of financially vulnerable women into the labor market and significantly reduce their likelihood of engaging in criminal activity. At the same time, introducing guaranteed mechanisms for employing women who have completed rehabilitation under state procurement programs is advisable.

***Fifthly,*** it is necessary to expand gender-sensitive training programs for law enforcement officers. For this purpose, academic curricula and professional development courses should include subjects such as the psychology of female criminality, investigation tactics considering gender factors, and international standards of judicial practice.

***Sixthly,*** increasing legal literacy and culture among women can be achieved through complex programs implemented in cooperation with civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations. Collaboration between state agencies, women's organizations, and volunteers in this process will help create new effective models for crime prevention.

## 4. Conclusion

Thus, if the legal framework, gender-sensitive prevention, specialized rehabilitation centers, economic support, professional training of law enforcement officers, and cooperation with civil society are implemented as a coherent mechanism, it will be possible to achieve sustainable results in preventing drug-related crimes committed by women.

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