



PRIORITY DIRECTIONS FOR IMPROVING SOCIAL PROGRAMS IN STATE POLICY

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the nature, legal foundations, and practical effectiveness of state social programs implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The study examines ongoing reforms aimed at developing the national social protection system, with particular emphasis on measures carried out within the framework of the Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy and the Social Protection Strategy of the Population. The research identifies several key challenges in the implementation of social programs, including inequitable resource allocation, insufficiently effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms, as well as issues related to digital infrastructure and the shortage of qualified personnel. To address these shortcomings, a set of scientific and practical recommendations is proposed, including the digitalization of social services, enhancement of transparency and openness, introduction of a results-oriented budgeting system, and adaptation of advanced international practices. The findings of the study contribute to improving the effectiveness of state social policy, promoting social justice, and enhancing the welfare of citizens.*

Keywords: *social programs, social protection, transparency, accountability, social insurance, results-oriented budgeting, social services, digitalization, social justice, welfare state.*

Introduction. Today we live in an era of globalization and informatization. While geopolitical conflicts and conflicts reign in some parts of the world, in other parts of the world, countries are adopting national strategic programs for development and progress, carrying out institutional, constitutional, economic and social reforms, and trying to raise their countries' positions in world leadership. In general, social programs are one of the central directions of state policy, which directly affect not only economic stability, but also social equality, human capital development and the



way of life of citizens, as well as their well-being. In particular, today's Uzbekistan is experiencing a period of rapid economic and social changes. The adoption of national and medium- and long-term strategies with defined goals and objectives, such as the "Development Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2022–2026", "Uzbekistan-2030", is proof of our words.

However, problems such as the lack of clearly defined monitoring and accountability mechanisms for ensuring the actual implementation of existing initiatives, and even if they are defined, they are weak, are hindering the full implementation of social programs. Priority tasks such as increasing the segment of the employed population by reducing the unemployed population and minimizing the level of poverty are on the agenda of reforms in Uzbekistan, which is a social state. In systems such as the "Single Social Register", issues of transparency and fairness are being questioned by the population and their trust in state organizations is showing a trend of decreasing. In this regard, it is an urgent task to analyze social programs and develop proposals for their functioning in real Uzbek conditions, as this will not only increase economic efficiency, but also contribute to social stability and the well-being of citizens.

Research methodology. The study used systematic, comparative-legal and statistical analysis methods. Regulatory and legal documents regulating social programs in the Republic of Uzbekistan, strategic programs and scientific sources related to the field were studied on the basis of content analysis. Factors affecting the effectiveness of social programs were analyzed using statistical data, and national and international experience was evaluated on the basis of a comparative approach. As a result of the study, existing problems were identified and scientific and practical recommendations were developed to improve social programs.

Before analyzing social programs in Uzbekistan, let's explain the concept of "social program", this concept is defined as follows:

planning documents containing measures for the development of sectors and industries that directly serve to ensure the living conditions and well-being of the population [1].

States implement various programs and projects to provide socio-economic and cultural support to their citizens in order to fulfill their social function. The ultimate goal is to develop human capital, form a group of people with broad economic opportunities, high intellectual potential, and raise the standard of living and standard of living of the population to a new qualitative level. Analyzing regulatory



documents, we should mention one norm that deserves attention. Namely, according to Article 1 of our Constitution in the new edition, adopted on the basis of a nationwide referendum on April 30, 2023, the duty and responsibility of the state behind the norm that Uzbekistan is a social state is great. As a result, the state's obligations in the social sphere have increased threefold. Designating Uzbekistan as a social state serves to create decent living conditions for the socially unprotected or needy strata through education, healthcare, social services, and alleviating social inequality in society, especially by supporting them [2]. In addition, other articles of our Basic Law also contain norms that serve the basic principles of social policy. For example, let's take Article 46, according to which:

Everyone has the right to social security in old age, in case of loss of working capacity, unemployment, as well as in case of loss of a breadwinner and in other cases established by law [3]. Or let's take Article 57, which states: The rights of the elderly, unable to work and living alone, persons with disabilities and other socially needy categories of the population are under state protection [4]. From this point of view, our state, taking upon itself the task of guaranteeing and ensuring the rights of this segment of the population, has, of course, adopted and implemented various programs for specific purposes, in their interests.

One of the practical measures set out in the Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 was the development of a “Social Protection Strategy for the Population”, which includes 16 priority goals. This strategy was developed based on the results and recommendations of the “Assessment of the Social Protection System in Uzbekistan” prepared in 2020 by the International Labor Organization, the World Bank and the United Nations Children’s Fund [5], and was approved by the special decree of the President No. 175 of July 22, 2022. According to it, the “Unified Register of Social Protection” information system was introduced in order to identify low-income families and provide them with targeted assistance, and the number of low-income families receiving benefits has increased fourfold over the past three years, reaching 1.9 million.

At the same time, one of the practical significances of this document is the establishment of the “Social Insurance Fund”, which does not have the status of a legal entity within the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the sources of financing its activities are determined as funds from the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan and other sources not prohibited by legislative acts [6].

After a brief overview of social programs implemented in Uzbekistan in recent



years, this strategy develops a roadmap for measures to be implemented in the near future. That is, new initiatives are put forward and the mechanism for their implementation and those responsible for their implementation are clearly defined. For example, a gradual transition to a social model of disability recognition and ensuring employment of people with disabilities and disabilities, the introduction of the practice of providing social services directly to the population at the mahalla level. Today, a radical reform of the system of citizens' self-government bodies, i.e. the mahalla institute, is being implemented in Uzbekistan and its integration into social programs.

However, some shortcomings are noticeable in the field. The state is trying to ensure inclusion in all areas based on the principle of "leaving no one behind." In particular, it is committed to supporting women and people with disabilities, ensuring equal opportunities and necessary conditions for their free development in life. In addition, on January 28 of this year, the following were determined in the presentation of proposals on social assistance and services by responsible officials under the President:

All "notebooks" such as "Youth Notebook", "Iron Notebook", "Women's Notebook" will be combined into a Single Social Notebook, and social assistance provided through them will be provided only to families included in it after the launch of the "Register of Poor Families" information system. The important rule that the recognition of a family as poor will serve as the basis for the provision of social assistance without requiring additional applications and documents from its members is established in order to create convenience for citizens, prevent bureaucracy and red tape in the system. It was noted that social information systems will also be launched to develop the field of digitalization and minimize the human factor. One of these is expected to be a social platform called "Children's Health" [7].

If it is implemented in practice, parents will have the opportunity to view an analysis of the diagnosis made for each of their children. According to experts, these functions are not all, other social services provided to children will be integrated with this information system, and all complex services will be available. This, in turn, will lead to the optimization and automation of state management in social policy. If we think logically, to implement all the above tasks, money, investments are needed, all these are budget-related processes.

For this reason, some new budgetary and extra-budgetary funds have been created



and launched. Among them, according to the Presidential Decree on Approval of the Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the “Social Insurance Fund” [8] under the Ministry of Economy and Finance, which is not a legal entity, has been launched, while in accordance with the Presidential Decree on Improving the Procedures for Financing the Social Protection System of the Population, it is envisaged to establish “Infrastructure and Social Stability” funds under district (city) khokimiyats, which are not legal entities. The National Agency for Social Protection under the President is a special authorized body that exercises control over the implementation of such tasks and implements a unified state policy in the field of social protection [9].

The latest ideas include the allocation of an additional \$200 million [10] in 2025 to support women's projects based on the Presidential Decree "On Additional Measures to Support the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship" adopted on March 7, 2025, and the establishment of a Council of Women Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan consisting of leading businesswomen based on the Presidential Decree "On Measures to Further Improve the Family and Women's Support System" adopted on March 14, 2025, as well as comprehensive programs such as the provision of unsecured loans of up to 100 million soums to women with a positive credit history, and the launch of the "Women Entrepreneurs" platform [10]. It is good to provide preferential and unsecured loans, but it is important to study their targeted orientation. A specific, specific loan amount should be allocated to a reasonable period of time to achieve the goal. The following points of this project work will provide optimal solutions that are of recommendatory and practical importance to the problems that may arise in connection with them.

Analysis of research results. We have talked about the work done in the above area to date and new initiatives being put forward. Now, during an in-depth analysis of the nature of state social programs, the following problems were first identified:

One of the main problems is the unfairness and biased approach to the distribution of resources. Because social assistance programs are sometimes distributed incorrectly, that is, people who do not actually need social assistance receive subsidies through "nepotism" and "cronyism" or become subjects of other types of social projects. The reason for this is, first of all, the low level of transparency and openness of local authorities and the lack of updating of the database in the system. If we explain more broadly, there are cases in real life where, at first, someone receives assistance within the framework of social programs, but later their material



and moral situation improves, but they remain in the system, or, like representatives of financially well-off families, they pretend to be helpless and get a place on the register through corruption and acquaintances. As a result, we observe that people in need of social assistance packages are being left out.

Another pressing issue is that the mechanisms for monitoring the results and holding those responsible accountable in the implementation of programs are not working properly. This leads to the ineffectiveness of projects and programs. As a result, our country's level in the international transparency and openness index is falling, and in addition, it is becoming a natural process to observe cases of a decrease in the participation and trust of the population.

We conclude the list of problems with the problem of a shortage of quality personnel. Whether we like it or not, the above-mentioned socially significant state programs are implemented by officials who are civil servants. They are required to be experts in their fields, have rich national and international experience, and have the competence to work with the population in a targeted manner. Personnel who have also thoroughly mastered the rules of ethics of civil servants will approach their work honestly and conscientiously, and will fulfill their tasks and assignments on time.

It is necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy of measures to address the above-mentioned problems. It would be advantageous to include the following proposals and recommendations in it:

firstly, the “Single Social Book” system should be completely digitized in stages to digitize and update the database. Only then will the human factor be reduced and other problems will be solved to some extent. In particular, the use of blockchain technology in the distribution of social assistance, through which each transaction will be transparent and auditable. Opening a “Social Assistance Monitoring” section on the www.mygov.uz portal, where information will be published on where each subsidy or assistance is directed. Secondly, it is necessary to publish open reports on the results of the implementation of each program, develop clear criteria for holding accountable those responsible for grossly violating the established rules in project management, especially those who did not adhere to the deadlines.

My proposal to amend and add to the strategy “On Approval of the Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan” is as follows: The phrase “every year” in the norm that the strategy is evaluated annually based on the implementation of implemented measures and target indicators is replaced by “at the end of each quarter” and is monitored and evaluated. I propose to include the norm



that “the head of the relevant ministries and departments No. 1 is personally responsible for ensuring the implementation of the tasks set out in the roadmap.”

Conclusion. To summarize the above. Not forgetting that everything comes down to the economy, and also taking into account such aspects as the limited resources of the state budget, we come to the conclusion that it is difficult to finance all social projects solely from the state budget. Therefore, it is necessary to look for additional sources. In order to attract additional funds, we need to create a favorable, attractive investment climate in Uzbekistan. In this regard, in my opinion, as stated in the budget document for 2025 [12] and the Strategy “On Social Protection of the Population” [13], we should not gradually transition to the “result-oriented budgeting” method in the distribution of budget funds, but rather switch to this “mode” as soon as possible. Because it is very important to maintain a balance in the ratio of budget revenues and expenditures. The general conclusion is that a number of problems related to state social programs that we have listed above require systemic, institutional reforms. They require a responsible approach from everyone, especially the political elite, who are representatives of the government. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure transparency, digitalization and accountability mechanisms in practice for the effective management of social programs. Taking into account limited budget resources, it will be possible to further develop an inclusive economy by accelerating the transition to the “results-oriented budgeting” method, improving the investment climate. This approach will ensure social justice and equality, positively affect the lifestyle of all citizens, and help Uzbekistan become a truly prosperous, social state.

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