

THE NEED FOR BUILDING A SOCIAL STATE IN UZBEKISTAN AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the necessity of forming the concept of a social state in the context of Uzbekistan, its theoretical foundations, and its practical potential for reducing poverty. It highlights the economic, legal, and cultural foundations of the social state, as well as its role in ensuring living standards, social equality, and well-being. The article examines, from a scientific perspective, the effectiveness of poverty reduction strategies, the principles of social justice, the state's social policy, and its cooperation with civil society institutions. In addition, it assesses the impact of ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan on the process of building a social state.

Introduction

The ultimate goal of reforms in Uzbekistan is social development and the welfare and interests of society, which has been firmly established in its Constitution. In the newly amended Constitution, it is explicitly stated: "Uzbekistan is a sovereign republic, a legal, social, secular, democratic state..." (Article 1). Today, Uzbekistan is boldly moving toward the construction of a social state and a just society. Therefore, the principle of "New Uzbekistan – a social state" has reached the stage where it should be enshrined as a constitutional norm.

A social state is not limited to providing the needy with food, essential goods, housing, or minimum quantities of consumer products necessary for living. It requires ensuring a sufficient salary for individuals and their families to live decently, guaranteeing employment, creating safe working conditions, and reducing poverty. At the same time, it includes protection against unemployment, guaranteed quality education, qualified medical care, equal opportunities for all, and comprehensive support for families, children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Additionally, access to essential resources for living—such as drinking water, natural gas, electricity, transportation, and other amenities—along with the prohibition of forced labor, is of significant importance in a social state.

Literature review

Research on alleviating poverty and addressing the dynamics of its civilizational shifts, as well as the impact of poverty and destitution on the socio-economic life of society and on setting poverty thresholds, has been conducted by scholars such as J. Keynes, A. Marshall, D. Ricardo, A. Sen, M. Kremer, A. Banerjee, Y. Duflo, G. Y. Anderson, D. Saks, B. S. Rountree, A. S. Ditton, D. Acemoglu and D. Robinson, A. P. Alexandrov, A. V. Karev, Y. Y.

Rumyantseva, A. A. Razumov, O. S. Abramova, L. M. Khusnutdinova, Y. G. Odegov, A. V. Vakhabov, B. Kh. Umrzakov, and L. N. Ovcharova in their philosophical and political studies.

Results and discussion

A social state is a state that meets the steadily growing social needs of its citizens, supports the social aspirations of different segments of the population for the development of the country, and ensures a stable socio-moral environment in society. The characteristics of such a state are outlined in Shavkat Mirziyoyev's book *"The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan"* as follows: "The development strategy of New Uzbekistan is about expanding citizens' participation in the socio-political life of the country, realizing their aspirations, implementing progressive initiatives, solving practical problems, improving living standards, and creating sufficient and necessary conditions for citizens to independently enhance their material well-being."

The social state is a product of a particular period in the historical development of humanity and represents a specific stage in statehood. The idea of a social state emerged long ago. For instance, in the era of the Ancient Roman Empire, concepts such as "social assistance" and "public aid" appeared during the reigns of emperors like Nerva and Trajan, and were particularly widespread during the time of Marcus Aurelius. Only from the 2nd century CE did the principle of organized assistance for the poor and needy gain universal recognition.

In this context, it is relevant to cite political scientist K. Rabbimov's views on defining the social state: a social state primarily entails responsibility, as the state and government assume constitutional obligations to protect their citizens socially. Furthermore, it implies prestige, since the world's most prosperous countries are those with strong social protection systems. At the core of the concept of a social state lies the value of equality. Humans naturally do not wish to be disadvantaged compared to others or to be exploited.

It was only from the mid-20th century that comprehensive studies on the social state as an integrated philosophical issue began in Europe. The conceptual ideas, conclusions, and arguments proposed in these studies indicate that the social state is not only related to human life but also constitutes a complex and extensive issue connected to social relations.

This raises the natural question: "What exactly is a social state?" The term "social" (ijtimoiy) comes from Arabic, meaning "pertaining to the community, society, and human life." A social state is therefore a product of a specific stage in the historical development of humanity and statehood. It is a state model aimed at providing quality education, qualified medical care, comprehensive support for families, children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, supplying housing for the needy, ensuring employment, creating safe working conditions, and reducing poverty.

In New Uzbekistan, building a social state involves strengthening citizens' active civic positions and initiative, fostering independent thinking and worldview, ensuring the primacy of justice in society, consolidating the foundations of a legal-democratic state, combating corruption, and countering ignorance through education. As stated, "To bring our country's development to a new level, governance, legislation, and society must change. If we fail to address problems, we will fall behind. Our people and younger generation will not be satisfied with us. Therefore, the idea of 'First – the individual, then society and the state' must be deeply ingrained in our Constitution, laws, and daily life."

This is particularly significant in the era of globalization, which imposes rapid and multifaceted development and tends to influence state and societal life strongly. This period develops and evolves with its unique ideas and ideologies, which exert considerable influence globally, including shaping the minds and hearts of the youth and affecting their confidence and will through various means.

A social state envisages providing housing for the needy, setting minimum quantities of essential consumer goods, ensuring sufficient wages for a decent life, guaranteeing employment, creating safe working conditions, and reducing poverty. Additionally, providing quality education, qualified medical care, and comprehensive support for families, children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities constitutes the core responsibilities of a social state.

In our view, a social state is a model aimed at ensuring each citizen attains a decent standard of living, reducing social inequalities, and distributing material wealth according to the principles of justice to assist those in need. Overall, the foundations for building a social state in Uzbekistan are being established. In this process, it is appropriate to examine the features and functions of a social state from the perspective of international standards.

By the present day, Uzbekistan has accumulated certain experience in democratic processes. Democracy in the country is understood as the ability to harmonize freedom with order and discipline. Accordingly, “wild democracy,” which could lead to socio-political disorder, has not been adopted, while attention has been paid to maintaining democracy in accordance with national characteristics. It was emphasized that the democratization process requires security strategies and protective capabilities.

Social sciences emphasize that democracy has dozens of models. However, what are the common principles for these models? First, the principle of social justice, meaning that democracy in any area of society must align with justice; second, the rule of law; third, the widespread practice of social cooperation. Prioritizing these principles ensures the value of democracy.

French sociologist Alain Touraine, in his article *“The Difficult Path of Democracy,”* analyzes democracy as a pluralistic phenomenon, noting that revolutionary events show that democracy and progress are not always synonymous and can sometimes conflict. According to Touraine, democracy does not depend on poverty or wealth, but on the existence of modern societal values, rationality, shared labor outcomes, and the readiness of forces to cooperate toward equitable distribution. In other words, democracy must develop in harmony with social cooperation.

It is evident that democracy and a just system are closely linked to harmony within society. The structure of social institutions must ensure the representation of all social groups and political forces. From this perspective, social cooperation assumes a socio-political significance as a value regulating the relationship between society and the state, and in this sense, it constitutes a principle of democracy. The concept of social justice occupies a special place in social life, serving as one of the main principles that guarantees citizens’ rights and obligations. This principle provides a foundation for members of society to live based on equality and mutual respect. Therefore, the idea of social justice is of paramount importance in the process of building a social state.

Conclusion

In this process, it is crucial to examine the main approaches used by foreign countries in assessing poverty levels and to study the local situation based on these approaches. The regions of Uzbekistan exhibit varying levels of socio-economic development. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the specific characteristics of each region when evaluating poverty levels. Taking inter-regional differences into account, it is advisable to develop and approve targeted measures based on the assessment results..

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