
STATE YOUTH POLICY IN UZBEKISTAN AND ITS ESSENCE

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Abstract:

This article examines the formation, development, and essence of state youth policy in Uzbekistan during the years of independence. It analyzes the legal foundations created to protect young people's rights and interests, support their education, employment, social protection, creativity, and participation in public administration. Particular attention is paid to the laws, state programmes, youth organizations, and reforms adopted between 1991 and the present. The study concludes that youth policy has become an important factor in developing human capital, strengthening civil society, and ensuring the country's sustainable progress.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, youth, state youth policy, legal foundations, youth rights, education, social protection, employment, human capital, youth organizations.

Introduction

In Uzbekistan, the education of young people as physically healthy and spiritually mature individuals has become one of the most important issues of state policy. President Sh. Mirziyoyev emphasized:

“In the development of any society, the healthy and well-rounded growth of the younger generation, which will determine its future, plays a decisive role. Therefore, in further expanding the scope and effectiveness of our reforms, we rely on our determined, energetic, and enterprising young people who are comprehensively developed and have thoroughly mastered modern knowledge and professions.”

This makes it necessary to study Uzbekistan's policy of social protection for young people from a historical perspective and to reveal the essence of the reforms being implemented in this field.

From the earliest days of independence, youth issues were elevated to the level of state policy. The Law “On the Foundations of State Youth Policy,” adopted in 1991, was the first comprehensive legal document in this field and established the main principles for protecting the legal interests of young people. In subsequent years, the legal foundations of this sphere were consistently improved through the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law “On Education,” the National Programme for Personnel Training, the Law “On State Youth Policy,” and various presidential decrees and resolutions.

Today, it is important to analyze, from historical and legal perspectives, the main stages in the formation and development of the legal foundations of state youth policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan during the years of independence. It is also necessary to explain the content and

essence of the regulatory legal documents adopted in this process and scientifically assess their role in ensuring national development and protecting the interests of young people.

After declaring its independence, Uzbekistan implemented new reforms in various areas of public life. One of the priority directions was the formation of a new state policy aimed at protecting young people and their interests, realizing their intellectual potential, and ensuring their participation in the development of the state and society. Independence required the creation of a legal system based on the principles of human rights, democracy, social justice, and national values.

From the earliest days of independence, young people began to receive special attention as one of the main priorities of state policy. The first step in the development of state youth policy was the adoption, on 20 November 1991, of the Law “On the Foundations of State Youth Policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan.” It became the first comprehensive regulatory legal act in the country’s history to regulate the field of youth policy.

The law established the fundamental principles for guaranteeing young people’s rights and freedoms, ensuring their access to education and employment, protecting their health, providing social protection, and supporting their participation in state and public administration. This document has historical significance as an important law that created the legal foundation of youth policy in independent Uzbekistan.

Youth policy became a priority area of state activity in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Its purpose was to create and guarantee the socio-economic, legal, and organizational conditions necessary for the social formation and development of young people and for the fullest possible realization of their creative abilities in the interests of society.

The law consisted of four sections and twenty-one articles. It guaranteed care for young people, their legal and social protection, support for youth initiatives, and their freedom to choose ways of pursuing their interests within the framework of the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The law also provided for the legal regulation of social relations involving young people and youth associations throughout the republic; economic, legal, and organizational support for the initiatives of young citizens and youth public organizations; and supervision over the fulfilment by all legal entities of the obligations towards young people established by the laws of Uzbekistan.

It defined the basic foundations of state youth policy concerning citizens between the ages of fourteen and thirty and established the main directions for shaping youth policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Although the Law “On the Foundations of State Youth Policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” adopted by the Supreme Council of Uzbekistan, was highly important, it did not cover every aspect of social development and therefore could not fully reflect all the specific features of the youth movement. Nevertheless, this law served as the basis for regulatory legal acts adopted in later years. It remained the principal legal document in the field until the adoption of the revised Law “On State Youth Policy” in 2016.

On 28 August 1992, shortly before the first anniversary of Uzbekistan’s independence, the President of the Republic issued the Decree “On Measures for State Support of Creative Youth

in Uzbekistan.” This decree created broader opportunities and benefits for young creative individuals.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted on 8 December 1992, played a central role in strengthening the legal foundations of youth policy in the country. The constitutional guarantees of equality among citizens, the right to free general education, employment, rest, healthcare, social security, and learning strengthened the legal status of young people.

In particular, the constitutional recognition of the right to education demonstrated that the upbringing of a well-rounded younger generation had become a priority of state policy. Although the Youth Union attempted to involve young people in socio-political processes during its five years of activity, it did not operate for a long period. The organization was dissolved in 1996. On 17 April of the same year, a new youth organization was established on the basis of the presidential decree “On the Kamolot Foundation of the Youth of the Republic of Uzbekistan.”

The adoption of the revised Law “On Education” and the National Programme for Personnel Training in 1997 demonstrated that the fundamental reform of the education system was a priority task of state policy.

These documents created the legal foundations for establishing a system of continuous education, training specialists with modern knowledge and professional competencies, and adapting the quality and content of education to international standards. In particular, the National Programme for Personnel Training was based on the concept of comprehensively developing the younger generation and educating competitive specialists who are committed to national and universal human values.

During this period, several state programmes were also developed to provide social support for young people, ensure their employment, encourage talented youth, and widely involve them in sports and cultural activities.

In particular, the activities of the Umid Foundation and the Kamolot Youth Social Movement, together with the introduction of various state scholarships, enabled young people to study at foreign educational institutions, increase their scientific potential, and acquire modern knowledge.

The laws and state programmes adopted between 1991 and 2000 also shaped the institutional foundations for implementing youth policy in Uzbekistan.

As mechanisms of cooperation between state bodies, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and youth associations developed, youth issues began to be regarded as a separate direction of state policy. This created the necessary legal and organizational basis for the further improvement of youth policy in subsequent years. On 24 January 2001, I. A. Karimov, the First President of independent Uzbekistan, received the leaders of an initiative group. Representatives of organizations, ministries, and other associations responsible for youth education also participated in the meeting.

The President delivered a speech concerning the future organization and emphasized: “Let Kamolot become a genuine source of support and strength for young people!”

Finally, on 5 April 2001, the founding congress of the Kamolot Youth Social Movement was held. Six hundred youth delegates participated in the congress, during which the charter and programme of the new social movement were discussed and approved.

The reforms implemented in this field since 2017 have raised youth policy to a new stage, expanded comprehensive support for young people, and further improved legal mechanisms. In today's New Uzbekistan, youth policy is regarded not only as a means of social protection but also as an important factor in developing human capital, training qualified personnel for an innovative economy, strengthening civil society, and ensuring the country's sustainable development.

Therefore, a scientific analysis of the formation of the legal foundations of state youth policy during the years of independence, its stages of development, and its historical evolution is of considerable theoretical and practical importance.

During this period, several laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan acquired particular importance, including the Law "On the Establishment of Youth Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan," adopted on 25 August 2017; the Law "On Science and Scientific Activity," adopted on 29 October 2019; the Law "On Volunteering Activities," adopted on 2 December 2019; and the Law "On Education," adopted on 23 September 2020.

Beginning in 2017, a fundamental transformation occurred in state youth policy. A state programme was developed on the basis of the Presidential Decree "On the Strategy of Actions for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021."

The programme identified such urgent tasks as further strengthening among broad sections of the population, especially young people, a commitment to the idea of independence, high spirituality, and humanistic traditions; developing immunity to alien ideas such as radicalism and extremism; and organizing cultural and public events aimed at meeting young people's intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural needs.

In conclusion, while the legal foundation of state youth policy in Uzbekistan was established during the years of independence, the regulatory legal acts adopted in subsequent years created a strong legal basis for reforms aimed at improving youth policy, developing human capital, and increasing young people's participation in the life of the state and society.

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