



NEW UZBEKISTAN ON THE PATH TO BUILDING A STRONG SOCIAL STATE: GENESIS, REFORMS AND RESULTS

Sultonaliyeva Umidakhon Muzaffar kizi

Tashkent International University

e-mail: sultonaliyeva09@gmail.com

M.Z. Ziyodullayev

Scientific supervisor: Professor

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17481054>

Abstract. The article examines scholars' perspectives on the concept and characteristics of a "social state," analyzes the large-scale reforms being implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan to build a strong social state and their outcomes, and draws specific conclusions based on these findings.

Keywords: social state, social policy, social security, social protection, social justice, social insurance, civil society, guaranteed education and medical services, strong social state, New Uzbekistan.

The history of statehood in developed countries worldwide demonstrates their continuous efforts to build an increasingly strong social state.

So, what is a social state? How are its characteristics and distinctive features manifested?

Indeed, numerous opinions and insights have been put forward by legal experts, scholars from other fields, statesmen, scientists, and experts on this matter. The modern concept of "social state" was first introduced into academic discourse in 1850 by the German scholar Lorenz von Stein. He emphasized that the state should contribute to the socio-economic development of its citizens and ensure absolute equality in personal rights for all social strata through its authority. In this context, human development is considered a necessary condition for the state's prosperity[9].

American scholars I. Kendall and G. Wilensky, who studied issues related to the social state, proposed half a century ago that a state acquires the status of a social state by ensuring minimum social standards (income, food, health, housing, education) for all its citizens[8].

Based on extensive research conducted by leading Swedish researchers on social state issues, K. Bergkvist, M.O. Ingve, and O. Lundberg, the characteristics of a social state are expressed through: the state's provision of minimum social standards, the comprehensiveness of social policy (i.e., its coverage of all segments of the population), and the level of stability in state spending and institutions in the social sphere. They also argue that a social state should focus not only on the system of social benefits or assistance provided by the state but also on reducing social inequalities in society[5].

According to David Garland, a renowned American sociologist and legal scholar, considered one of the founders of the modern scientific school in the field of social welfare state, "a social welfare state is a state system aimed at ensuring social security and well-being in society, whose main task is to ensure the social security of the population and take measures against various social issues, including poverty, illness, unemployment, and the state implements such tasks through laws and various social programs." D. Garland attempts to study the state's activities in the social sphere by dividing them into various sectors, particularly social support, healthcare, education, unemployment benefits, and other services[6].

In this regard, the Russian scholar A.P. Alexandrova defines the concept of a "social welfare state" through the following characteristics: the legal nature of social policy implementation; the existence of a social insurance system; social payments from the budget; a state-run system of social protection and employment; the existence of state social assistance for all members of society; recognition of the state's responsibility for citizens' well-being; creation of conditions for the development of civil society[4].

One of our national legal scholars, Professor F.H. Otakhonov, emphasizes that "a social welfare state is, first and foremost, a state that cares about social justice, the well-being and social protection of its citizens, which carries out its activities in conjunction with the social protection of vulnerable segments of the population: the unemployed, those who have lost their ability to work, those who have lost their breadwinner, people with disabilities, children, and the elderly"[9].

According to another professor, U.A. Qodirov, the essence of a social welfare state is manifested in its social policy, which is based on the following foundations: the legal basis of social policy; the social insurance system; the state social protection system; guaranteed education and medical services for citizens; timely payment of wages, benefits, and scholarships; protection of the population from unemployment, retraining[7].

Thus, based on the above thoughts and considerations, it can be said that "A social welfare state is a state that implements laws, programs, and policies in the economic, social, and political spheres to ensure the social security of the population, strengthen social justice, and improve the standard of living."

This state provides social assistance and services to combat various social risks, including poverty, unemployment, and various problems among the population, while simultaneously striving to reduce social inequality. In a true social welfare state, conditions are created for every person to have a prosperous standard of living, including quality education, guaranteed medical care, decent working conditions and fair wages, pensions and benefits, and housing, ensuring that no citizen is left alone with their problems.

The main characteristics of a social state are reflected in: the existence of a social protection and security system; the creation of equal opportunities for all segments of the population; systematic allocation of economic resources to the social sphere and its stability; ensuring social justice and equality in society; the state's active social policy; and the effective implementation of social services.

Indeed, in recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has entered a new stage of development in the political, economic, and social spheres. The concept of "New Uzbekistan - a society where human dignity is exalted," developed under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in recent years, has created a theoretical and practical foundation for the transition from a political state to a social state.

The fundamental reforms being carried out in our country and the legislative acts adopted in this process clearly demonstrate that the idea of a "social state" is not only about strengthening the social protection system, but also about placing human potential at the center of state development. This direction is taking shape as a practical manifestation of Uzbekistan's new development model - the principle of "individual - society - state."

After gaining independence, Uzbekistan initially focused on building a political state, strengthening sovereignty, and forming a constitutional governance system. However, since 2016, the concept of human factors, justice, and prosperity has taken priority at the center of

this policy. The idea of "New Uzbekistan - a socially oriented state," put forward by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has become a new paradigm for the country's development. According to this, caring for every citizen, placing human interests at the center of state policy, and ensuring social justice and equal opportunities are defined as the main goals.

It should be especially noted that in President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's Address to the Oliy Majlis on January 24, 2020, the existence of poverty among certain segments of the population was acknowledged for the first time, and comprehensive efforts to reduce it were initiated. In this regard, an entirely new system of targeted work with low-income families, women, and youth - the "iron notebook" - has been introduced in all districts and cities, in every mahalla. In a short period, 527 thousand citizens were employed through this system. Additionally, due to tax benefits for the self-employed population and the abolition of many restrictions, 500,000 citizens legally established their employment.[1]

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 3, 2021 No. UP-29 "On Priority Directions of State Policy for the Development of Entrepreneurship, Ensuring Employment and Poverty Reduction in the Mahalla" established the position of assistant to the khokim of the district (city) on issues of entrepreneurship development, employment, and poverty reduction in each town, village, aul, as well as in each mahalla of cities, towns, villages, and auls. Their tasks were defined to provide financial assistance for implementing entrepreneurial initiatives, further improve mechanisms for ensuring income-generating employment, reduce poverty by elevating the mahalla-based work system to a new level, and bring public services and targeted financial support instruments provided at the republic, regional, district, and city levels directly to the mahalla level.[13]

Systemic measures implemented in our republic, ensuring stable and high economic growth rates, have made it possible to reduce the poverty level from 23 percent in 2019 to 11 percent in 2023. The goal is to reduce poverty to 6% by the end of 2025.[15]

Furthermore, the education system, a crucial aspect of the social sphere, is being revitalized in our country as the foundation of a social state. As a result of the measures implemented in this area, over the past eight years, expenditures on education and science in Uzbekistan have increased sixfold, amounting to 378 trillion soums. During this period, the number of kindergartens increased from 5,200 to 38,000, and the coverage rate rose from 27% to 78%. The salaries of preschool educators were equalized with those of school teachers, and the salaries of managers and teachers in these institutions were nearly doubled.

In recent years, about 500 new schools have been built, and 1 million student places have been created through the expansion of existing ones. In recent years, priority attention has been given to higher education, and as a result of the reforms carried out over the past eight years, the number of universities in the republic has increased from 77 to 202, and the number of students has grown from 250,000 to 1.5 million. Opportunities for young people to choose universities for admission have been expanded. The salaries of teachers in these higher education institutions have been significantly increased[2].

Profound reforms are being carried out in the healthcare system based on the concept of "healthy lifestyle - healthy society." Primary healthcare services have been strengthened, family medicine practices have been introduced, and programs for maternal and child health and support for people with disabilities have been expanded.

Today, special attention is being paid in our country to the introduction of a new model of primary health care, based on international experience and aimed at bringing medical services

closer to the population. On this basis, multidisciplinary central polyclinics, family doctor's offices and family polyclinics, and mahalla medical centers are being developed using a unified approach.

Thanks to the large-scale reforms implemented in recent years, fundamental changes are taking place in the healthcare system. First and foremost, due to the significant increase in allocated budget funds and the creation of wide opportunities for private sector development, the material and technical base and personnel potential of the sector are being strengthened. The network of services is expanding, a healthy competitive environment is forming, and quality and efficiency are increasing. Advanced modern technologies are being actively introduced into diagnostic and treatment practices.

A new approach is being applied to provide high-quality medical care to vulnerable segments of the population on a mahalla-based, targeted, and specific basis. The "Electronic Polyclinic" and "Electronic Prescription" programs are being implemented in the system. The ambulance system has been transferred to automated electronic management and equipped with 1,000 specialized modern foreign-made vehicles. Specialized medical services are also being brought closer to the population. It is noteworthy that there are now more than 500 diagnostic methods and more than 800 treatment methods in this area[3].

In the elections held on October 13, 2020, at the session of the United Nations General Assembly, Uzbekistan was elected for the first time in the history of our national statehood as a member of the UN Human Rights Council and became an active participant in the protection of human rights in the international arena[10]. Legislative acts on ensuring gender equality and the activities of the Committee for Family and Women of the Republic of Uzbekistan are contributing to increasing the economic and political activity of women. In his speech at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev summarized the systematic work on achieving gender equality and noted that for the first time, the proportion of women in public administration has reached 35 percent.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-81 dated March 1, 2022 "On Measures to Improve the System of Work with Families and Women, Support for Mahallas and the Elderly," one position of women's activist was introduced in each town, village, and aul, as well as in each mahalla of cities, towns, villages, and auls, funded by the local budget. Their tasks were defined to elevate the system of working with families, women, and elderly representatives to a new level, further improve support for mahallas, effectively organize the activities of those responsible for working in mahallas, and ensure their cooperation [14]. They study the situation of women in each mahalla, and 1 million women in need of social protection have been included in the "Women's Notebook," providing them with social assistance in accordance with legislative acts.

The year 2023 held a unique place in the history of national statehood of the Republic of Uzbekistan. According to the results of the nationwide referendum, the updated Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted on April 30, 2023, with 90.21% of citizens' votes. The provisions related to the state's social obligations have tripled in the new version of the Constitution of Uzbekistan. Most importantly, for the first time in our Basic Law, the provision "Uzbekistan is a sovereign, democratic, legal, social, and secular state with a republican form of government" (Article 1) has been established.

Considering that a social state is primarily understood as a state that guarantees its citizens a certain minimum level of well-being, the main goal of New Uzbekistan is clearly defined as caring for every citizen, ensuring inclusive development, and providing equal rights and opportunities for all segments of the population [11].

The amendments and additions to the updated Constitution are aimed primarily at implementing the principle of "For Human Dignity." Firstly, they strengthen the constitutional guarantees of labor, social, and environmental rights of citizens, including the rights of vulnerable segments of the population. Most importantly, it has been clearly stipulated that pensions, benefits, and other types of social assistance cannot be less than the officially established minimum consumer spending. Secondly, the legal guarantees of the family institution have been strengthened. In particular, it has been constitutionally enshrined that marriage is based on the voluntary consent and equality of women and men, the state creates necessary social and economic conditions for the full development of the family, provides benefits and social guarantees to large families, and that the creation of all conditions for the interests of the child and their full physical, mental, and cultural development is the most important priority of state policy. Thirdly, the constitutional mechanisms for ensuring citizens' rights to qualified medical care and a healthy natural environment have been strengthened. Fourthly, specific constitutional guarantees for supporting education, science, the nation, and youth in particular, have been established [12].

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that

In New Uzbekistan, the idea of a social state has been formed as a new constitutional and practical model that defines human dignity as the highest value. Considering a social state as one that ensures citizens' prosperity, equal opportunities and social justice, guarantees education, healthcare, labor and social protection, in New Uzbekistan this idea is implemented based on the "individual - society - state" principle. It is expressed through consistent state policies in areas such as poverty reduction, business development, modernizing education and healthcare systems, and ensuring gender equality. This defines the practical stage of Uzbekistan's transition from a political state to a strong social state.

References:

1. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis // [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/4057> (accessed: 26.10.2025).
- Mirziyoyev Sh.M. To the Teachers and Mentors of Uzbekistan: President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's congratulations to the teachers and mentors of Uzbekistan // [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/8541> (accessed: 27.10.2025).
3. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. To Healthcare Workers of Uzbekistan: President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's Holiday Greetings to Healthcare Workers of Uzbekistan // [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/7678> (accessed: 25.10.2025).
4. Aleksandrova A.P. Protection of social and economic rights and freedoms: general theoretical analysis of the dissertation abstract for the degree of Candidate of Legal Sciences Kazan 2002. Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, st. Kremlin, 18, Faculty of Law, room 326.
- Lundberg O. Understanding the role of welfare state characteristics for health and inequalities - an analytical review // BMC Public Health, - 2013. - No 13. - pp.1234.

- Garland, D. *The Welfare State: A Fundamental Dimension of Modern Government*. - 2014. - No. 3 (55). - pp.327-364.
7. Kadirov U.A. Signs of Uzbekistan as a Social State // Journal of Positive School Psychology. - 2022. - No 6. - pp. 2038-2039.
8. Kendall, I., and Harold, L. Wilensky. The Welfare. State and Equality: Structural and Ideological Roots of Public Expenditures, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1975. Journal of Social Policy. 1976. - No 5 (1). - pp. 95-96.
9. Otakhonov F.H. Constitutional foundations of a social state // [Electronic resource]. - URL: https://uza.uz/oz/posts/ijtimoiy-davlatning-konstitutsiyaviy-asoslari_471934 (accessed: 27.10.2025).
10. Saidov A.Kh. The historical significance of Uzbekistan's membership in the UN Human Rights Council // [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://insonhuquqlari.uz/oz/news/ozbekistonning-bmt-inson-huquqlari-boyicha-kengashiga-a'zolingining-tarixiy-ahamiyati> (accessed: 25.10.2025).
11. Saidov A.Kh. The new edition of the Constitution - a solid guarantee of human honor, dignity and rights // [Electronic resource]. - URL: https://constitution.uz/ru/pages/Konstitutsiya_mustahkam_kafolat (accessed: 20.10.2025).
12. Shirinov J. New Uzbekistan - a Social State // [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://yuz.uz/news/yangi-ozbekiston---ijtimoiy-davlat> (accessed: 20.10.2025).
13. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 3, 2021 No. UP-29 "On Priority Directions of State Policy for the Development of Entrepreneurship, Ensuring Employment and Poverty Reduction in the Mahalla" // National Database of Legislation. - 2021. - No 06/21/29/1130.
14. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 1, 2022 No. UP-81 "On Measures to Improve the System of Work with Families and Women, Support for Mahalla and the Elderly" // National Database of Legislation. - 2022. - No 06/22/81/0174.
15. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 29, 2024 No. UP-143 "On taking measures to reduce poverty and improve the well-being of the population to a new level" // National Database of Legislation. - 2021. - No 06/24/143/0740