

## **Reducing Social Inequality Through Practical Implementation of Social Guarantees**

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### **Abstract**

The article analyzes the main instruments for reducing social inequality in society. The author cites various sociological concepts for explaining social inequality and links social guarantees that insure the population against various risks of declining well-being. The key principle of the social state, the principles of which are laid down in the new edition of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, is the state's obligations to insure against risks, which reflects the measures and actions already being implemented in practice.

**Keywords:** welfare state, social inequality, social justice, reducing inequality, social guarantees.

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the aspects of studying social mobility in modern research is the consideration of this phenomenon as a reflection of the effectiveness of social policy and measures for its implementation as a driver for activating the potential of various groups of the population. Social policy, in this case, is expressed in the degree of implementation of the principles of social justice in society. Social justice is presented both as a phenomenon of public life and as a principle of the welfare state. In scientific literature, social justice is defined as a phenomenon determined by the socio-cultural characteristics of a particular state, specific characteristics of society and historically established attitudes in the public consciousness of the nature of justice and injustice. Social policy through public administration institutions is aimed at meeting the needs of the population and assessing [1] its compliance with the principles of social justice, closely related to the perception of justice in society. Social policy if it meets the needs of the population, it indicates the level of implementation of the principles of social justice, expressed in the understanding of “what is good for society, what we should strive for, what is the role of the state in this, how well the law is observed, its relationship with civil society” [2].

## **METHODOLOGY**

The experience of economically developed countries shows that a significant contribution to the social sphere, including the development of education, health care, the introduction of innovative technologies, support for vulnerable groups of the population, the younger generation, ensuring equal opportunities and rights, which in turn helps to ensure the effectiveness of the system of social mobility of the population. In these areas, the essence of the social state is clearly visible, in which, under the conditions of effective social policy, measures are implemented to support a decent standard of living for all categories of the population, including the vulnerable, satisfying significant needs of a material and spiritual nature.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The development of the social state is directly related to the directions of social policy - the implementation of measures to ensure employment of the population, including conditions for free choice of profession, decent working conditions, protection of labor rights, guarantees in case of loss of ability to work, etc. Today, the dynamically developing economic situation poses the issue of strengthening the socio-economic guarantees of working citizens to the state. Labor is an important and significant component of every person's life. It provides opportunities for material wealth, self-realization. The extent to which a person is realized in labor activity determines his health, mood, relationships in the family, team and, of course, in society as a whole. This component of labor significantly complements the material aspects of labor and plays an important role in a person's life. A person is at the center of all reforms in Uzbekistan, and naturally, considerable attention is paid to the growth of the standard and quality of life of the population. In this process, a special place is occupied by the material support of the life of each person and members of his family, as it allows satisfying the basic needs of a person for food, housing, clothing.

But material satisfaction of needs is not the ultimate goal of human life, in other words, when a person is well-fed, clothed and shod, and also feels safe, the question arises about people's desire to use and develop intellectual, creative potential. In practice, this scheme is possible with a quick response to changes in the economy, labor market and insurance of working citizens from the risks of losing their jobs and earnings.

In this case, it is important how the state acts - it organizes assistance to those who are left without work, regulates the number of benefits for temporarily unemployed citizens, takes into account the necessary and sufficient minimum of material support that allows you to "survive" a difficult period in a person's life until he finds a job and decent earnings. The tool that ensures the calculation of the minimum to meet a person's basic needs is the minimum wage (MW). In international practice, this is one of the tools that is used in a set of measures to reduce income inequality among people. The MW in Uzbekistan was introduced in 2019, replacing the MW (minimum wage). Currently, the MW is used to calculate the amount of official salary, allowances, compensation for additional workload, as well as the amount of social benefits and unemployment benefits. The MW is gradually increasing, which dynamically affects the growth of the permissible minimum wage - this indicates an increase in the minimum permissible threshold for wages, that is, employers do not have the right to pay wages below this level.

If we look at this from the perspective of social guarantees and the quality of human life, we can safely say that significant efforts of the state are also measures to ensure conditions for decent work, free choice of work, favorable working conditions that meet safety and hygiene requirements, fair remuneration for work without any discrimination, as well as the right to protection from

unemployment in certain cases that seriously affect the level of social protection of workers and, in general, the reduction of poverty. Each of us feels that the more protected we are in our workplace, the greater the desire and motivation to effectively perform our functional duties, thereby contributing to the development of the organization.

At the same time, the state does not leave out of its focus the guarantees for working citizens in case of forced loss of work. The unemployment rate is currently recorded at 8.6% (which is 1.3 million citizens), while 14% of the population of Uzbekistan are in poverty. The issues of unemployment and poverty reduction are relevant for our country, accordingly, the positive effect of providing social guarantees depends on a balanced and thoughtful policy in this area. The solution to these issues is possible through the creation of jobs, vocational training or retraining, support for entrepreneurship. For example, in 2022, due to these measures, it was possible to reduce the poverty rate from 17% to 14% - it seems that 3% is an insignificant result, but if you take a closer look at the families that are included in this number, then this is a serious change for everyone whose material and social situation has changed under the influence of these measures. This category includes people who have received practical assistance in setting up their own business, undergoing professional training, which allowed them to increase their material well-being, but also their social well-being. Such state programs are a direct confirmation of concern for the interests of the individual.

It should be noted that one of the social guarantees is ensuring safety for human health in the workplace, preventing overloads, excessive workload on the employee, which helps reduce professional risks associated with industrial injuries and occupational diseases. In national legislation, the Law "On Labor Protection" establishes the main directions of state policy in the field of labor protection, in which the priority is to ensure the priority of human life and health during the implementation of labor activities. All this is included in the mandatory requirements for compliance with labor protection standards and is established for all organizations.

The situations that have occurred in the country in recent years and the response of employers to them clearly show that the practical implementation of the right to decent and safe work is a pressing issue for the population. For example, during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, measures were taken to protect employees from possible harmful effects at work: protective equipment (masks), disinfectants were provided free of charge, most organizations switched to online mode, there were requirements to hold mass events, meetings online or not at all.

Despite the above measures being implemented, the issues of discriminatory behavior in the workplace towards working women, especially pregnant women and women with minor children, became the basis for enshrining the ban on discrimination against this category in the new version of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, since in practice there are situations when the employer violates the rights of women, citing the woman's status - pregnancy or the presence of small children. Such violations include a reduction in wages, refusal to hire, dismissal due to pregnancy, refusal of legal payments, refusal to hire young unmarried girls, citing the future prospects of her marriage and, accordingly, possible subsequent maternity leave.

In the area of improving the system of social protection of citizens as the basis of the social state, the new version of the Constitution establishes measures for the comprehensive protection of various groups of the population, primarily the vulnerable, from social risks, including unemployment - the state takes measures to ensure employment of citizens, protect them from unemployment, and reduce poverty. In order to ensure employment of citizens, the state organizes and encourages their professional training and retraining (Article 43).

In the sphere of support for the education system, healthcare and the formation of spiritual and cultural values, amendments have been made that secure the right of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan to receive a guaranteed volume of medical care at the expense of the state, guaranteeing the obligation of the state to develop the healthcare system, its state and non-state forms, various types of medical insurance, and ensure the sanitary and epidemiological well-being of the population. At the same time, the state creates conditions for the development of physical culture and sports, the formation of a healthy lifestyle among the population (Article 48), the obligation of the state to ensure the development of a continuous education system, its various types and forms, state and non-state educational organizations (Article 50). In addition, a separate article has been introduced on the rights of citizens to receive higher education in state educational organizations on a competitive basis at the expense of the state and guarantees of ensuring the rights of higher educational organizations to academic freedom, self-government, freedom of research and teaching (Article 51), as well as a separate article devoted to the status and role of a teacher in society (Article 52).

The direction of social policy in the form of environmental protection, including ensuring the environmental safety of the country, preserving nature, and protecting environmental rights, is reflected in the Basic Law of the country in the form of new legal norms - the right of everyone to a favorable environment, reliable information about its condition (Article 49), the responsibility of the state to create conditions for the implementation of public control in the field of urban development activities in order to ensure the environmental rights of citizens and prevent harmful impacts on the environment (Article 49), the responsibility of the state to implement measures in accordance with the principle of sustainable development to improve, restore and protect the environment, maintain ecological balance; adoption by the state of measures to protect and restore the ecological system, social and economic development of the Aral Sea region (Article 49), assigning responsibility to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the implementation of a unified state policy in the field of environmental protection, conservation of natural wealth and biological diversity, combating climate change, epidemics, pandemics and mitigating their consequences (Article 116), assigning to local authorities the implementation of measures aimed at ensuring the environmental development of territories (Article 123).

The amendments to the Constitution in 2023 reflect the principles of a social state, which implies the desire to equalize opportunities for all groups of the population, reducing gaps and inequalities. Thus, the strategic vector of social policy in the form of development of Uzbekistan as a social state, is expressed in the system of goals, principles, measures aimed at achieving the welfare of society, respectively, based on the principles of equality and social justice. In the sociological scientific field, issues of social equality and inequality play a significant role, since various social problems are studied through the prism of inequality, the central one of which is the relationship between the principles of social justice and equality in the functioning of society and its structural elements. Equality in this context means ensuring equal access to social institutions and fair social mobility in society. Social mobility in modern research is considered as a reflection of the effectiveness of institutional measures taken by the state to activate the creative potential of various groups of the population. An idea of how these processes actually develop makes it possible to assess the success of society in solving the problem of equal opportunities, which, according to many scientists, is a cornerstone in terms of achieving an optimal balance between economic efficiency and social justice.

Based on the context of the social state, expressed in providing equal starting opportunities for the realization of their potential for all groups of the population, the problems of social inequality become the subject of constant study in sociology - "at the center of discussions conducted by scientists around the world, of course, are numerous problems associated with economic inequality. However, along with economic inequality, which manifests itself both on a global scale and at the local level, there were and still are political and professional inequalities, which were identified by P. Sorokin, as well as other traditional types of social inequality - gender inequality, racial, ethnic, religious inequality, etc." [3]

Inequality is a natural state in society, as individuals constantly face unequal access to resources, including education, leisure, services, infrastructure. At the same time, inequality is observed in geographical aspects, place of residence, at the individual level - in abilities, talents, skills, abilities, aspirations, etc.

The combination of high and rising inequality, ethnic, gender, and geographic differences, and low social mobility do not bode well for social and political stability. Where differences are large and widening, between those who have always had (and their children) and those who have never had (and their children), and there are no clear ways to cross from the wrong to the right side of the railroad tracks, frustrations grow and discontent can become explosive (Atkinson 2015; Markowitz 2019; Piketty 2014; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009) [4].

In recent years, several main areas of inequality research have been clearly identified: class inequality, which is expressed in the reduction of individuals' opportunities for career advancement; gender inequality, which manifests itself in the uneven distribution of material and social benefits based on whether people are male or female; ethnic inequalities, which manifest themselves in discrimination and affect the social mobility of individuals.

Inequality manifests itself in different contexts by different actors. It is simultaneously accepted as a fact of everyday life and condemned as an affront to civilized society. Inequality, as well as the discussions and debates surrounding it, are rediscovered and re-enacted over time and in changing contexts. Many of these debates have been at the forefront since the early days of sociological research, but have been reworked for the purposes and needs of politicians, policymakers, academics, campaigners and individuals seeking to make sense of their lives. They are based on normative views about human motivation and how society functions, views about human motivation that are themselves subject to reconstruction as different discourses come to dominate and shape people's thinking [5].

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Inequality is a long-standing topic of sociological problems. It is implied in studies of stratification, as well as poverty, wealth and various aspects of social status. The results of sociological studies show the expansion of the scientific field of the issue under study, which with the complication of social problems becomes quite relevant, since research into issues of social inequality in the context of social guarantees allows for the development of comprehensive measures and the formation of clear provisions in reducing inequality and social tension.

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