

Reforms In The Activity Of Mahallas (Neighborhood) In Uzbekistan

Manzurakhon Pazliddinovna Yunusova

Doctor of Sciences (DSc) in Philosophy, Professor of Andizhan State University, Republic of Uzbekistan

E-mail: mpyunusova71@gmail.com

Abstract: In this article examines ways to enhance the effectiveness of the activities of the Mahalla Citizens' Assemblies and investigates the primary aspects of changes occurring within them. The study substantiates the need to strengthen the financial foundations of Mahalla assemblies, introduce transparent mechanisms for the utilization of Mahalla budgets, and implement information and communication technologies along with mechanisms for public oversight.

Key words: Mahalla, public oversight, election, chairman, street leader, state, government.

INTRODUCTION

In Uzbekistan, neighborhoods have a special place as a social bridge between the state and society, and they are one of the important tools in ensuring the country's sustainable development and social stability. In the era of new Uzbekistan, large-scale reforms aimed at improving the activities of neighborhoods, meeting the social needs of the population and strengthening the self-management system are being implemented. In this article, the current situation in the neighborhood system of Uzbekistan, the changes being implemented and their future directions of development were studied.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

This article presents an analysis of the reforms implemented in Uzbekistan on the neighborhood system. The research used a number of national and foreign sources, as well as materials based on practices and experiences. As the main source, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Self-Governing Bodies of Citizens" occupies an important place. This law defines the legal basis of the activities of the neighborhood and specifies the specific rules regarding its composition and tasks.

The article also uses case studies of the projects implemented by the World Bank and other international organizations on the development of the infrastructure of the neighborhood system in Uzbekistan. In particular, the training and experience of Brigitte Bode on organizing mobilization to solve neighborhood problems is mentioned. Also, the information presented by the local facilitators of the "National Movement of Upliftment" who participated in the project and the analyzes reflecting the modern conditions of the neighborhoods of Uzbekistan provide a scientific basis for the article.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the article, the method of legal analysis was used to collect and analyze the data, in which the analysis was carried out based on the norms of the activities of the neighborhood in the legislation of Uzbekistan and comparison with local self-government bodies in other countries. A systematic approach was used to systematize changes in administrative, legal and social areas. Empirical research methods are also used in the article. In particular, the results of surveys and observations on the participation of community leaders and residents were analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Self-government bodies are one of the systems that have undergone the most changes in New Uzbekistan. The goal of these changes is the same, and it is a combination of efforts aimed at increasing the prestige of the neighborhood in society, creating a structure that is suitable for the needs and demands of the population, and can help to reduce social stability, public control, and poverty. . The analysis of the changes made in the neighborhood system shows that Uzbekistan is implementing the transformation process based on the experience of a number of developed countries and our national identity.

Systematizing the suggestions and recommendations and a number of comments on the changes, we divided them into administrative-legal, social, and financial changes.

Implementation of the following in the administrative sphere will have a positive effect on solving the existing problems of the neighborhood.

First of all, it is necessary to strengthen the recognition of the neighborhood as the only form of self-governing bodies in the legislation, and the current legal status of this body and the system that has been formed under its name for thousands of years. In this case, it is necessary to increase the legal and social importance of the neighborhood in society by not using names such as village and settlement in other legal documents.

Secondly, the rule that the neighborhood is not a part of state bodies (Clause 2 of Article 8 of the Law on Citizen Self-Government Bodies) should be removed from the legislation, along with the universal meaning of the name of the neighborhood in the political system. It is necessary to turn it into a component of local state power as a self-governing body.

Based on the experience of Japan, it is necessary to form local government authorities at a three-level level - to establish mutual legal relations between regions, districts, and neighborhoods.

The significance of the neighborhood as a state authority is explained by the following:

- the neighborhood budget should be formed from the taxes of the population in the area, and only state bodies have the right to collect and dispose of taxes and fees (forming and implementing the local budget, setting local taxes, fees, creating extra-budgetary funds are the powers of local state authorities enters) [1];

- makes decisions that are mandatory for the population living in the area, which is evidence of the existence of elements of state power in the neighborhood;

- in practice, neighborhood heads perform a number of tasks that are equal to the powers of state authorities - tasks related to the collection of various taxes and fees, as well as utility payments.

Thirdly, it is necessary to organize the election of neighborhood chairmen by every citizen of the voting age of the neighborhood, to set the term of office of neighborhood chairpersons to 5 years, like other state authorities. This increases the importance of the neighborhood as a body of state power, allows it to enter into contact with other local state power bodies in the administrative system in a manner worthy of its status. As a result of the implementation of the above changes, many problems hindering the activity of the neighborhood will find their positive solution.

The role of the election in increasing the effectiveness of the activities of the community assembly is incomparable. The governing bodies of the neighborhood, which have been formed for thousands of years, have been formed for many years from the point of view of informal leadership. That is, for a certain period of time and although the authorities were not clearly defined, the neighborhood leaders managed the community based on traditions and values. The current system of electing the chairman of the neighborhood and its elders does not correspond to national traditions and values, nor to foreign experience. From this point of view, it is appropriate to change the legislation on the election of the chairman of the neighborhood and his advisers in the following manner.

First of all, it is necessary to set the term of office of neighborhood chairpersons as five years.

Secondly, to conduct the election of the chairman of the neighborhood on the basis of an alternative by means of general, equal, direct, secret voting, creating conditions to ensure the participation of every citizen with the right to vote in the neighborhood during the election process. need

Thirdly, it is necessary to introduce the practice of reporting in the council of elders on the activity of neighborhood chairpersons, in which case, it is necessary to introduce the institution of dismissal for failure to fulfill the tasks set by the chairperson within the deadline.

One of the problems in neighborhood legislation is the use of the word "elder" to refer to the chairman of the neighborhood and sometimes to his advisers. In the context of gender policy and women's emancipation in Uzbekistan, it is time to abandon this term and use the neutral terms chairman and adviser. Because now women are active in the neighborhood system on an equal footing with men, and the use of the term "elder" in relation to them creates inconsistency.

The inclusion of the neighborhood in the system of state authorities does not degrade its self-governance features, but rather enriches it. As it enters the system of local state power, the neighborhood will have the possibility of direct financing, and the existing legal practice will be legitimized.

In recent years, it has been shown that developed countries, in particular, Japan, have local self-

government bodies, and they continue to perform functions related to both state power and self-government.

At the current stage of civil society development in Uzbekistan, a number of problems of citizen mobilization are clearly visible in neighborhood activities.

Firstly, due to the fact that salaries and financing are from the district and city budgets, most of the chairmen are busy collecting taxes, collecting fees, and helping to hold various events, which are not part of their authority. Reception of citizens, hearing and solving their problems has become secondary. From the conducted questionnaires and observations, it is clear that mobilization activities related to self-management are almost not observed.

Secondly, because the neighborhood is not part of the state authorities, there is no legal basis for its relations with other district or city organizations. In some districts and cities, the activities of neighborhood chairpersons are effective, and in others, they are not related to the neighborhood.

Thirdly, in the current conditions, there is no effective method of bringing citizens' problems to the neighborhood in an organized manner. Five thousand citizens of the neighborhood may have five thousand problems. However, some of them need to be solved immediately, but solutions for finding an answer to the question have not been developed. These problems have a systemic nature and require the development and popularization of a certain new system of traditions and values.

In this regard, it is possible to use the experience of the Rural Infrastructure Development Project implemented in Uzbekistan by the International Development Association of the World Bank [2].

American scientist Brigitte Bode [3], who was involved in the project as a trainer, conducted a series of trainings on the role of mobilization and its organization in solving neighborhood problems.

It is known that the decision-making process in the neighborhoods remains unclear. Therefore, the public does not have enough information about the decisions made in the neighborhoods. This leads to the fact that the decisions made in the neighborhood are not only implemented, but also not at the level of awareness. In order to solve such problems, a new approach to the decision-making process in the neighborhood is needed, and one can refer to the experience of Brigitte Bode[4].

It should be noted that Brigit Bode's Rural Development Plan is aimed at the purposeful spending of funds allocated by citizens from the World Bank in a certain neighborhood - directing it to the most necessary problem and establishing public control over its implementation. The materials provided by the Andijan region branch of the National Movement of Upliftment, the facilitators who participated in this project - Azizbek Egamberdiev, Bekhzod Yusupov and Sharofiddin Khoshimjanov, as well as video lectures available in open sources were studied.

Based on the studies, a mechanism of regular decision-making process was developed in the neighborhood. It is known that according to Article 9 of the current Law on "Citizens' Self-Governing Bodies", "Citizens' assembly represents the interests of the population and makes decisions on its behalf that are valid within the relevant territory.

Persons who have reached the age of eighteen and are permanently living in the relevant area will participate in the citizens' meeting. This norm remains one of the norms that rarely works in practice. For example, the assembly of citizens of the neighborhood wants to promote a project in the open budget competition. Is it primary to repair the school in the neighborhood, to build a water facility or to pave the road? A lengthy justification can be prepared for each of these problems. At the same time, there is no mechanism of how to come to a certain decision when solving various issues related to the life of the neighborhood. In such a situation, it is necessary to improve the current situation in the community meeting and create conditions for citizens to freely express their opinions and opinions while respecting the interests of others. One side of the issue is that there is no example of a meeting with the participation of every resident over the age of 18 in a neighborhood and a certain decision was made. This norm was written in the spirit of direct democracy, similar to the time of ancient Athens, and did not take into account the fact that the population of many classes lived in the neighborhood (in Athens, women and slaves did not participate in decision-making, and the level of the electorate was close to each other was).

After the election for the post of neighborhood chairman, councilors from designated streets should be recommended by residents. In this case, the precinct election commission will have to ensure that advisers belonging to different strata of the population, with an equal number of men and women, are recommended in agreement with the population.

After the formation of the team of advisers, the analysis of socio-material resources of the neighborhood according to the model created by Brigitte Bode, solving problems in the field of education, analyzing the state of health and studying the causes of poverty in seminar-trainings participation will be necessary.

As soon as the chairman and advisers of the neighborhood start their work, it will be possible to create an opportunity for the activists of the neighborhood to look at their activities in a critical spirit by organizing this seminar with the strength of professors and teachers of higher education institutions in each region.

One of the important problems in improving the activities of the neighborhood is the issue of public control. It is known that according to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Public Control" [5], self-government bodies are subject to public control. At the same time, in the course of studies and observations conducted in some neighborhoods, it became clear that neighborhood leaders understand that public control means regulating the behavior of young people and resolving family disputes. As a result of the authorities and obligations of the head of the neighborhood being at the level of the district hokimist specialist, the possibilities of public control have become extremely difficult. There is a lack of administrative resources to send out questionnaires or organize public hearings on public utilities, road construction, and other issues based on citizen requests. For example, there is a high probability that the request of the head of the neighborhood, who is engaged in collecting payments for natural gas on the behalf of the district administration, to the district gas office regarding the improvement of natural gas pressure, will not be fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

From our side, the two issues proposed above - the creation of the neighborhood budget and the legal determination of the authority of the neighborhood as a local state authority can give positive results in the process of public control. At the same time, it is necessary to create an electronic platform for monitoring the decisions and questionnaires sent by community assemblies to state authorities on various forms of public control. In general, it is necessary to create the "Mahalla" portal, the only one in the Republic of Uzbekistan, to monitor the electoral process in the neighborhood, the formation of the composition of advisers, public control and the budget of the neighborhood, and thereby create an opportunity to transparently monitor the processes in the neighborhood. Also, it is necessary to create a mechanism for citizens of the community to raise issues related to public control on this platform, to confirm this problem by consultants, and to take measures for the implementation of public control by the head of the community.

In general, the neighborhood has tremendous community control resources. If this potential is used, it will be possible to find a timely solution to many problems. It will be possible to establish effective public control on a nationwide scale in communal services, medical, educational and other fields. Summarizing the above, it is necessary to emphasize the following:

it is necessary to strengthen the legal position of the neighborhood citizens' assembly in the system of state power;

to set the term of office of the chairman of the neighborhood assembly as 5 years and thereby increase the social prestige of the neighborhood;

it's time to strengthen the financial basis of the activities of the community assemblies.

REFERENCES:

1. <https://lex.uz/docs/20596#39252> – Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
2. <https://lex.uz/docs/5123778> - Decision No. PD-4898 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated November 25, 2020
3. https://www.linkedin.com/in/brigitta-bode-63b99a4a?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_profile_view_base_contact_details%3BBd4xiLxNQH2YcyUzZk6B7g%3D%3D
4. https://www.youtube.com/redirect?event=channel_description&redir_token=QUFFLUhqbk - The Rural Infrastructure Development Project will be implemented by a Unit under the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Project financing amounts to \$183.6 million, of which, \$100 million from a World Bank IDA credit, \$82 million from an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank credit, and US\$1.6 million from the Government of Uzbekistan. The project will be

implemented from 2020 to 2024 in five regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan: Jizzakh, Syrdarya, Ferghana, Namangan, and Andijan, covering 21 districts and more than 300 villages in these regions. The Project's development objectives are to: (i) improve the quality of basic infrastructure, and (ii) strengthen participatory local governance processes in selected qishloqs.

5. <https://lex.uz/docs/3679092> - National database of legal documents, 13.04.2018, No. 03/18/474/1062; National database of legislative information, 04/21/2021, No. 03/21/683/0375