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UZBEKISTAN EDUCATIONAL POLICY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND FLAWS

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Abstract

In this article, the education policy of Uzbekistan is analyzed across periods. The policies, reforms and their results implemented during these periods are studied. The opinions of experts and the educational policies and achievements of the countries are comparatively analyzed. During the past period, the expected results and consequences of the education policy, as well as the shortcomings, have been revealed. Defect elimination mechanisms are explained. As an opportunity to improve the education policy in Uzbekistan, the dangerous and promising sides of the privatization policy have been revealed.

Keywords: Education policy, reforms, higher education, education modernization process, periodization of education policy, opportunities for education development, institutions forming the education system, legal, social, economic and political bases of education policy, competitiveness of the education system, negative factors affecting the development of education, shortcomings in education policy .

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the important features of education is its continuity. Because education progresses from simple to complex. Education policy is also based on this. Based on this, education policy can be divided into several directions. The first direction is the preschool education policy, which means that the object of this policy is the process of preschool education, and the foundation of education is related to this direction. This direction was neglected until 2016. This might be related to the state's financial capabilities. But effective education policy cannot be implemented without developing this system. That is, preschool education seemed to be cut off in the state education policy. The level of enrollment of children in preschool education was around 30%. As a result, this had a negative impact on other areas of education. In order to prevent this problem, a specific policy has been implemented since 2017. In order to coordinate the policy in this regard, the Ministry of Preschool Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan





was established on September 30, 2017 by presidential decree. This political institution has become the main subject of politics in this direction. By 2020, the level of children's enrollment in preschool educational institutions has reached 60.9%. The focus was mainly on the privatization of the system. As a result, private, state and private partnership kindergartens were formed. Such changes in preschool education will undoubtedly have a positive effect on the quality of education. But such a trend is mostly manifested in cities. The opening of private kindergartens in rural areas is not carried out on a mass scale. However, more than 50% of the population of Uzbekistan lives in rural areas. In this regard, it is appropriate for the government to develop a policy related to the opening of preschool educational institutions in rural areas.

The next direction is the secondary education inclusive direction, which is also an important direction of the general education policy. Although many measures and programs have been adopted in this direction since the first years of independence, the main problems have not been solved. To this day, these problems, the lack of schools, their unsatisfactory material and technical base, the level of teachers, remain the priority direction of today's politics. There are 10,130 (2021) schools in Uzbekistan. 40 more schools are planned to be built this year. According to officials, the number of schoolchildren is 6.24 million, and the design capacity of schools is 5.06 million. That is, to eliminate the lack of schools, it is necessary to build another 1,000 schools with 1,200 seats. Moreover, due to the year-by-year increase in the number of students, this indicator is expected to reach 2 million by 2025. For example, despite the fact that the population of neighboring Kazakhstan is almost 2 times less than ours, 1,000 schools were built in 30 years, and another 1,000 schools are planned to be built by 2025. However, we did not use the available opportunities effectively. For example, the building of colleges was not completely converted into schools. According to the data, in 2018 (the year when the majority of colleges were terminated), there were 1,556 secondary special vocational education institutions, of which 123 were academic lyceums and 1,433 vocational colleges. 400 of these buildings were given to schools. Lyceums and some vocational colleges were preserved. even if we take into account the remaining 400 buildings, we could not use the opportunity to turn them into schools.

Or the material and technical base of the existing schools is not in a satisfactory condition. For example, there are more than 3,000 schools in need of repair (135 need to be built, 1,177 need to be reconstructed, and 1,695 need to be overhauled. As a solution to the problem, it is important to involve the private sector in school construction, to carry out a policy of promoting school building through sponsorship.

The next direction is the direction related to higher education. The penetration of the private sector in higher education has ensured an increase in the coverage of higher education. Today, about 305 applicants can become students. In the following years, this indicator increased by 3 times. But this is not up to the demand based on world experience. For this, it is important to increase the coverage to 50%. This is taken into account in the government strategy and is planned to be achieved in 2026. But the issue of numbers can be solved. What about quality? There is no solution to the issues such as whether the material, technical and methodical base





of the private higher education institutions opening today, the percentage of professors and teachers, meets the requirements of higher education.

For this, first of all, it is important to implement a policy of creating healthy competition among educational institutions by introducing a certification system for students below a certain level in the national ranking of higher education institutions to start working in a certain profession.

As you can see, when dividing the education policy into directions, we based on its directions based on the continuity of education. To justify such an approach, it is appropriate to derive from the principle of system and element. That is, if we take any process as a specific system, that is, education policy, there are elements closely related to it. Based on this, if the educational policy becomes a whole system, the directions we have put forward above are the elements.

2. STAGES OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN UZBEKISTAN

Based on the requirements of the time, education is modernized and acquires a new character. This process is noted as the process of modernization of education. This process is a joint process implemented by the state with the active support of society. First of all, it is important that it meets the current and future requirements of the time. This is the complexity of the issue, that is, it must meet the requirements of the future. The reason is that it is impossible to conduct education policy based only on the perspective or only on the basis of today's requirements.

Taking this into account, let's talk about the stages of education policy from the period of independence to the present day. We have divided it into four stages

The first stage was 1991-1997;

The Second stage 1997-2005;

The third stage is 2005-2016;

The fourth stage is 2016-2022. Now let's talk about them in detail.

2.1. The first stage

In the first stage, the period from the first years of independence to 1997. During this period, the state initially tried to manifest reformist policy. Early reforms introduced the system of electing the heads of the higher education system, but this practice was soon put to an end. Since 1992, the test system for admission to higher education has been introduced as a trial, and since 1994, admission to higher education institutions of the republic has been introduced in the form of a general test. Since 1995, the system of admission to study on the basis of the state budget and on the basis of the contract has been introduced.

A new institution STC was formed in the formation of educational policy. Nevertheless, during this period, no attention was paid to strengthening the material and technical base of the Higher Education Institution and to maintaining the status of professors and teachers in society. As a result of the centralization of access to OTM, a corrupt system started and controlled from the center began to form. Educational policy has not shown any adequate response to this evil. The





status of the intellectual began to decline as he got older in society. In this regard, there was no policy that would lead to drastic changes.

From the first year of independence, the educational policy focused on structural changes at the level of higher education. According to experts, attention was focused on three things: firstly, on the priority of university education; secondly, on the division and specialization of higher education institutions; and thirdly, on the regionalization and placement of higher education.

It was mainly based on the experience of the education system in the West. Based on this, several institutes were transformed into universities. In particular, Tashkent State Technical University, Tashkent State University of Economics, Tashkent State Agrarian University and Fergana State University were established.

At the same time, new institutes were established from large universities. In particular, the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent State Legal Institute, Tashkent State Institute of Chemistry and Technology, Tashkent State Institute of Architecture and Construction, and Tashkent Financial Institute were established. The positive side of this policy is the nationalization and modernization of personnel delivery to various branches of the state. On the negative side, the policy of centralization was followed, and most of the newly established HEIs were established in the capital. They did not pay attention to opening branches in the regions. For example, in Bukhara, where science has been developed for a long time, 2 HEIs operated, while in Tashkent at that time, 10 HEIs operated.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 28, 1992 "On the establishment of new higher educational institutions of the Republic", Andijan, Bukhara, Gulistan, Karshi, Namangan, Termiz, Urganch pedagogic institutes were transformed into universities. However, as we mentioned above, neither local branches of Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent State Law Institute, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, nor the opportunity to train the specialties prepared by them in other universities was created. However, in the Decree, the priority of the goal of coordination of local higher education institutions was noted.

On July 2, 1992, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" was adopted. According to the Decree of the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on September 23, 1992, the University of World Economy and Diplomacy was established. The university was assigned the task of training highly qualified specialists in the field of the world economy, international relations, diplomacy, law and international journalism. Based on the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated May 14, 1994, the State Test Center started working under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The state test center was entrusted with the organization and conduct of tests in higher and secondary special educational institutions.

Another important change during that period was the reduction of the part-time and evening education system. According to officials, such an educational system has negatively affected





the quality of education. However, in the first year of independence, 114,100 students studied in correspondence departments and 37,800 in evening departments in our country.

Since 1996, the transition to two levels of the higher education system and the systems of education in the era of state grants and contracts has been launched.

Students were sent to study in Turkey for the first time, paying attention to foreign cooperation in education policy. In this regard, 07.04.1992. The decision of the Cabinet of Ministers was issued on measures to implement the agreements in the field of personnel training between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Turkey No. N 178.

2.2. The second stage

We took the second stage of education policy in the period from 1997 to 2005. The reason is that in 1997, the Law "On Education" and the "National Program of Personnel Training" were adopted, and the policy of forming continuous education was carried out. Let's talk about it in more detail. Based on this, the reform of the higher education system was started. At the heart of the policy was the strengthening of the two-level education system and the development of new state education standards based on it. At the same time, the classifier was adopted. It was noted that the goal of the reform of higher education is to adapt the normative legal framework to the requirements of the world education space and to increase the quality of training of highly qualified personnel.

The federal elections of 1999 had an impact on education policy. In order to prevent fundamentalism and extremism in the higher education system, the government set the task of teaching new subjects (the idea of national independence). At the same time, Tashkent Islamic University was established.

Due to the fact that the status of Uzbekistan's HEIs is decreasing in the region, the first results of educational reforms in the neighboring republics have been noticed, and efforts have been made to artificially raise their status. In particular, in 2000, Tashkent State University was granted the status of a national university. However, many applauded such a policy of the government and evaluated it as unreasonable. The education policy of this period is widely applauded without reason. In particular, researcher R. Siddiqov puts forward the opinion that "Training of highly qualified personnel in the higher education system, ensuring the continuity and continuity of education, joining the world education system, has always been in the focus of the government's attention as a priority direction of state policy in the field of education."

It was the policy of this period that made Uzbekistan's higher education unable to compete with the higher education system of other countries in the region, and led to an increase in corrupt conditions in the system.

For example, according to the data, in 2001, 11.4% of the gross domestic product was allocated to education, of which 15.8% went to higher education. This is quite an average indicator, but most of this money was spent on the development of the material and technical base, and because the corruption in this system did not have the expected effect.





At the initial stage of this period, as noted by experts, "In the radical reform of the higher education system, a policy aimed at preserving the positive potential of the existing personnel training system, structural restructuring and ensuring the priority of university education was carried out.

In 2001-2005, the policy of continuing reforms in the higher education system was followed, and the main focus was on the policy of introducing modern information technologies into the educational system. For this purpose, the Tashkent Institute of Electrotechnical Communication was transformed into the Tashkent University of Information Technologies in 2002. From the 2002-2003 academic year, the training of specialists in the fields of software product development, network technologies, mobile radiotelephone communication, electronic commerce and information security began.

Based on the experiences of some countries (PRC, RF, Iran) due to security reasons, focusing on the organization of the national segment of the Internet network in the education system, the "ZiyoNET" network was formed. However, the mechanisms for enriching it and increasing its resources were not effectively established. In this regard, the policy of using coercive mechanisms rather than encouraging mechanisms for scientists was conducted. Naturally, this did not give the expected result. This segment could not compete with other global segments and could not garner the expected audience. Or, when HEIs connect to the Internet global network, its speed problems have had a negative impact on effective use. In addition, limited admission quotas have made the admissions system one of the most complex and corrupt in the world. The level of coverage of higher education was 8-10%. For example, in the 2005-2006 academic year, 278,700 students studied in 62 universities of the Republic. About 70,000 of them are first-year students. That is, the coverage was more than 8%.

The question of the year-on-year increase in the population is consistent with the admission quota, and the policy of increasing the admission quota for graduates has not been implemented. A competitive environment was not created in the higher education system. In this period, based on the fact that school education is the basis of high-quality higher education, the "2004-2009 State National Program for the Development of School Education" was adopted. Another interesting aspect is that the graduates are trained mainly for the educational system or for government agencies. Personnel for the non-state sector were not adequately trained. For example, during this period, about 55 percent of students (151.8 thousand) were in the field of education.

Another issue is the issue of foreign cooperation in education policy. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 1, 2003, the policy of educating the youth of Uzbekistan was implemented in the world's most prestigious higher education institutions, and the "Umid" and "Ustoz" funds were merged and the "Talent Fund" was established. This is actually due to the fact that the policy on the above front has not justified itself. That is, it was explained that most of the students sent through the "Umid" fund did not return. But the reasons for their non-return were related to the fact that the salaries offered to them are 10-15 times lower, especially in the educational system. For example, at





that time, an ordinary teacher earned around 100 US dollars, while abroad it was 1000-1500 US dollars.

2.3. The third stage

The next stage of the education policy includes the years 2005-20016. As a result of the policies carried out during this period, stagnation was formed in higher education. Neighboring republics, even Kyrgyz education, have surpassed us in one or another aspect. Researcher R. Siddikov rightly stated that "on the basis of the analysis and generalization of the experience gained in 2005-2016, in accordance with the prospects of socio-economic development of the country, the improvement of the personnel training system and the modernization of higher education were started. funds directed to the introduction of communication technologies were not enough. The fact that issues of social protection of workers in the field of education at all levels are neglected, and the low quality of education in the school and secondary special vocational education system, unfortunately led to the widespread outbreak of corruption in many higher educational institutions.

In this period, the same old policy was again focused on giving priority to strengthening the material and technical base of education. For example, on May 20, 2011, on the basis of the Presidential Decree "On measures to strengthen the material and technical base of higher education institutions and fundamentally improve the quality of training of highly qualified specialists" Improvement Program" was adopted".

In fact, there are three foundations in the development of education. The first is a qualified professor-teacher, the second is the level of the student and his desire, and the last is the material and technical base. Their impact on educational efficiency is at the same level. The biggest shortcoming of the policy of that time was only the third one, that is, while focusing on strengthening the material and technical base, the others were not paid attention to. For example, the monthly salary of a professor is even the lowest among Central Asian countries. However, more than 277 billion sums was allocated within the framework of the above program. Another thing is that the wrong policy of the previous period was continued. That is, admissions and directions have been shortened. "On the basis of the program, an updated classification of higher education majors and specialties was developed, and the number of undergraduate majors was reduced from 228 to 165, and the number of master's majors was reduced from 1200 to 447 due to the consolidation of similar majors according to their content and the completion of specializations that were not required in economic sectors and social spheres."

Based on the program, by the end of 2014, construction and reconstruction work worth 230 billion sums was completed in 19 higher educational institutions. Nevertheless, as a result of the poor quality of construction works and high level of corruption, the material and technical base of these HEIs did not meet the requirements of the time. For example, we witnessed that the construction work was not completed at the Tashkent Institute of Chemical Technology, where we are studying at an independent research institute, and it was not equipped with modern laboratories.





The authorities explain this by the fact that the value of money allocated 5 years ago as a result of inflation differs sharply from the value of goods. During this period, in the matter of cooperation with foreign countries, based on previous mistakes, the policy of encirclement and closure was carried out, which also had a negative impact on the quality of education. At the same time, the policy of establishing branches of foreign higher education institutions in our country was implemented, paying attention to the opening of branches of prestigious higher education institutions in our country, and not sending students abroad.For example, Moscow State University in 2006, Russian Oil and Gas University in 2007, Singapore Management Development Institute, Turin Polytechnic University in 2009, South Korean Inha University branches were established in 2014. But the fact that they were all established in the center, in the capital, caused an imbalance between local areas and higher education in the capital.

Therefore, the educational policy of this period did not give the expected result. Uzbekistan's higher education system has fallen to third place in the region in terms of competitiveness and level. Corruption in the system increased and became the most corrupt sector. There was no competitive environment among HEIs at all. The single system of entrance exams test system did not justify itself.

At the same time, several other shortcomings were allowed in the education policy.

Firstly, the policy of fully adapting the education system of Uzbekistan to the students of the market economy was not carried out in the educational policy. That is, if the policy of forming private education to create a competitive environment is not implemented. The quota system, which is contrary to the market economy, was preserved and financial and academic independence was not given to HEIs.

Secondly, the policy did not pay attention to the issue of increasing the allocation of funds for education. For example, until 2011, only 5.2% of the total state expenditure was allocated to higher education. If compared with other countries, this indicator was equal to 13.1% in Kazakhstan, 23.1% in Russia, and 31.9% in Turkey.

Thirdly, due to the lack of policies aimed at encouraging scientific potential, encouraging those with scientific degrees. The value of academic degrees in HEIs has been steadily decreasing. In 2005, 22,228 pedagogues worked in higher educational institutions of the republic, 42.8% of them had academic titles and degrees, and in 2014-2015, their number was 22,841, and 37.8% of them had academic titles. It is known that one of the criteria that determines the prestige of educational institutions abroad is the weight of professors. In this regard, free competition has been formed, and a professor who does not have enough attention will move to another university. That's why they appreciate them.

2.4. The fourth stage

In the next phase of education policy from 2017 to the present period, special attention was paid to solving the above problems. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, said: "We are accepting many programs, but are there enough proactive and patriotic, highly qualified personnel to implement them? Are the specialists being trained in





higher educational institutions able to fulfill the huge tasks set before us? Do the knowledge and skills of the teachers and professors who teach them meet the requirements of the time? Unfortunately, these questions are not easy to answer. "We will have to develop a program for the further development of the system of higher education institutions for 2017-2021 and implement it," he said.

Based on this, in 2017-2021, the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan was determined to improve the education policy and conduct a policy aimed at solving the above problems.

First of all, during this period, a policy focused on financial stimulation of the professor's education and raising his status in society began to be implemented. As a result of this policy, the salary of professors was increased 3 times in two years, from 1000 USD per month. Based on the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 1030 dated December 24, 2019, at the initiative of the President, a 60% increase from the budget was allocated to those with a doctorate degree, and a 30% increase was allocated to those with a doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree. this is definitely the reason for striving for a scientific degree and increasing the status of scientists in society.

In addition, in this period, in order to strengthen the competition between the private enterprises, the policy of allowing and supporting the activities of private enterprises is being carried out. In the academic year 2016-2017, there were 7 branches of foreign educational institutions, and today their number has reached 30. Or, today the number of non-state HEIs in our country has reached 25.

On October 8, 2019, the concept of development of higher education until 2030 was adopted by the presidential decree. It includes the development of public-private partnership in the field of higher education, increasing the level of coverage with higher education from 50 percent based on the organization of activities of state and non-state higher education institutions in the regions, creating a healthy competitive environment in the field;

Turning the National University of Uzbekistan and Samarkand State University into the flagship of our country's higher education institutions; at least 10 higher education institutions in the republic are included in the list of higher education institutions in the first 1,000 of the rankings of internationally recognized organizations (Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings, Times Nearer Education or Academic Ranking of World Universities), including the National University of Uzbekistan and Samarkand State University in the first 500 inclusion in the list of higher education institutions; priority tasks such as gradually transferring the educational process to the credit-module system in higher education institutions were determined. It was noted that the educational policy is also based on this. At the same time, it is planned to increase student coverage to 50% by 2030. At the moment, this indicator has approached 30 percent. The policy of applying foreign cooperation is being pursued for this purpose, and the "El-Yurt Umid" fund has been established. The "El-Yurt Umidi" fund will announce a selection of scholarships for a total of 4,000 places during the years 2019-2021.

Financial independence was granted to 35 HEIs in January 2022 by Presidential Decree.



3. CONCLUSION

On the initiative of the parliament, the higher education system was declared a corruption-free sector, and new state units and departments were established in HEIs. In general, compared to the previous periods, the policy and its results are noteworthy. At the same time, it can be noted that there are certain problems.

First, too many benefits in the education system (there are more than 10 benefits) have a negative impact on healthy competition and quality. For example, in the 2020 academic year, there was a situation where applicants who showed exactly 100% results were admitted to study on the basis of a special contract. Secondly, there is a continuation of the experiments in education. Researching is needed. But it is not appropriate to implement it continuously and on a system-wide scale. For example, the practice of curtailing curricula and science programs is still ongoing.

Thirdly, due to the general lack of coordination, it can be noted that, despite the drastic reduction of social and humanities, the study load is not decreasing, that is, the repetitions are increasing as a result of the over-exaggeration of specialized subjects.

Fourthly, we pay more attention to the form and pay less attention to the content. Despite the introduction of the credit module system as a foreign experience, there is no policy to prevent its violation with strict procedures. So, although drastic changes have taken place in education policy during this period, time shows that we still have a lot of work to do.

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