

**ISSUES OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM
OF THE POPULATION IN UZBEKISTAN**

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Abstract: This article examines the current state, reforms, and challenges of the social protection system in Uzbekistan within the framework of the country's ongoing socio-economic transformation. Based on recent legislative acts and strategic programs, the paper highlights institutional innovations, identifies systemic gaps, and proposes practical recommendations for strengthening the effectiveness and inclusiveness of social protection mechanisms. In recent years, Uzbekistan has significantly reformed its approach to social protection by emphasizing transparency, accountability, and outcome-based financing. The traditional expenditure-oriented financing model has been gradually replaced by one that aligns resource allocation with measurable social impact. The adoption of digital technologies and the formation of the Unified Social Protection Registry have played a central role in this shift.

Keywords: Social protection, social policy, social insurance, digitalization, social assistance, Unified Social Protection Registry, Uzbekistan, effectiveness, targeted support Uzbekistan, social reforms.

Introduction

In the context of the New Uzbekistan's economic development, the issue of social protection of the population remains one of the central priorities of the state's social policy. Uzbekistan's social protection system is being gradually reformed to ensure comprehensive support for vulnerable groups, safeguard against social and economic risks, and promote equal opportunities for all citizens.

Social protection, in a broad sense, refers to a set of legal, economic, and social measures that ensure the social and material security of the population. It reflects the care of the state and society for individuals in need due to age, health, or economic vulnerability. The core objective of social protection is to continuously improve the well-being of citizens, eliminate inequalities in education, professional skills, and income levels, and ensure a decent standard of living for all members of society.

The main components of Uzbekistan's social protection system include:

- State-provided benefits and social assistance;
- Mandatory and voluntary social insurance schemes;
- Social services for people with disabilities, the elderly, and individuals living alone;
- Social housing and subsidy programs.

To further enhance this system, the government adopted the National Strategy for Social Protection of the Population for 2022–2030, marking a significant step in institutional development.

Materials and Methods

This research is based on a qualitative and analytical approach, using both documentary analysis and comparative assessment of Uzbekistan's social protection reforms.

The following sources were used in the work:

- Presidential Decree No. PF-175 (July 25, 2022) "On Approval of the Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan";
- Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 515 (September 20, 2022) "On Measures to Develop the State Social Insurance System";

- Official reports from the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the State Statistics Agency;
 - Analytical reviews of international organizations (UNDP, World Bank, ILO).
- Data were synthesized through comparative and structural analysis to evaluate the evolution of Uzbekistan’s social protection system, institutional changes, and identified problems.

Results

The study revealed that Uzbekistan’s social protection system has undergone major reforms in recent years. The establishment of the Social Insurance Fund within the Ministry of Economy and Finance represents an important institutional innovation aimed at improving the efficiency of state social insurance payments.

The results of the study were as follows:

- The introduction of proactive digital benefit assignment, where allowances for pregnancy and childbirth are automatically processed via the “Unified Register of Social Protection” information system;
- Payment procedures modernized through integration with AT “National Bank”, ensuring direct and timely financial transfers to recipients;
- Expansion of benefit coverage to include women employed in private and individual sectors for at least six months prior to childbirth;
- Gradual development of a solidarity-based insurance model, providing protection to all eligible citizens during social risks.

According to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (2024), targeted cash benefits coverage increased by 38% between 2021 and 2024. The introduction of digital social contracts enabled over 120,000 recipients to transition into self-employment or vocational training. This has reduced the burden on state finances while empowering beneficiaries.

Table 1: Trends in Social Support (2021–2024)¹

Year	The number of families receiving social assistance	Budget Allocated (bln UZS)	Coverage Increase (%)
2021	615,000	2,700	-
2022	765,000	3,400	+24.4%
2023	810,000	3,800	+5.9%
2024	850,000	4,200	+4.9%

However, the research also identified several persisting challenges:

- Weak targeting efficiency, with many benefits not reaching those truly in need;
- Insufficient development of health and unemployment insurance mechanisms;
- Limited financial capacity of local budgets, restricting social protection initiatives;
- Incomplete digital integration across ministries and databases, leading to inefficiencies in information exchange.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that while Uzbekistan has made notable progress in institutional reform and digitalization of social protection, several systemic barriers still hinder full effectiveness. The weak targeting of benefits reduces trust and efficiency, while financial and administrative fragmentation limits comprehensive service delivery.

To address these issues, it is crucial to:

¹ Analyzed by the author based on data from the website of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan

1. Expand digital solutions for data-driven targeting and monitoring;
2. Introduce mandatory health and unemployment insurance to strengthen social resilience;
3. Encourage public–private partnerships to expand the provision of social services;
4. Create a multi-sectoral integrated data platform linked to the Unified Social Register;
5. Strengthen the “Mahalla” (community) institution, as it serves as the most localized and trusted structure for identifying vulnerable households.

These measures align with the global trend toward inclusive and adaptive social protection systems, which emphasize resilience, equity, and digital innovation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the social protection system of Uzbekistan is evolving in line with the country’s socio-economic modernization. While significant reforms have been implemented, continued institutional, financial, and technological improvements are essential.

Social protection remains not only a guarantee of social justice but also a key factor for sustainable development and national stability. Modernizing this system according to international standards will enable Uzbekistan to achieve a higher quality of life for its citizens and build a more equitable and resilient society.

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