

THE ROLE OF LABOUR RESOURCES IN ECONOMIC PROCESSES AND THE THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF THEIR RATIONAL USE

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Annotation: In this article, the economic essence of labor resources, their role as a factor of production, and the theoretical and methodological foundations of their efficient utilization are analyzed. Labor resources are considered not only a key element of production within the economic system but also a strategic resource that ensures social stability. The study examines the formation of labor resources, their structural composition, quality indicators, and modern approaches to their management. In particular, the processes of increasing labor productivity, stabilizing employment levels, and adapting to changes in the labor market are explored based on theoretical concepts.

Key words: labor resources, economic processes, human capital, labor market, employment, productivity, resource management.

Introduction

In the context of modern global economic development, the effective management and rational utilization of human capital—especially labor resources—play a strategic role in ensuring the stable growth rates of every country and society. According to data from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the number of labor resources worldwide currently stands at approximately 3.5 billion people, of whom around 3.1 billion are considered economically active. At the same time, the number of unemployed individuals is estimated to be around 190–200 million. Forecasts suggest that by the year 2030, the global labor force will approach 4 billion people.

This trend indicates the continued expansion of the global labor market and a growing demand for the workforce. However, demographic shifts, imbalances in employment levels, and labor migration flows are giving rise to new challenges and issues within the global economy.

In this context, a thorough scientific study of the functional role of labor resources in the economic system, their efficiency indicators, and management mechanisms becomes an urgent scientific and practical task.

Main Part

The formation of the term "labor resources" is closely connected with the development of economic systems and changes in socio-economic processes. This term began to take shape in the early 20th century during the Industrial Revolution. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of advanced technologies, the demand for labor resources increased, and the workforce and its productivity became an integral part of the economic system.

Labor resources are one of the key factors of economic development. Despite numerous scientific studies and practical research conducted on the organization of the labor market, the distribution of the workforce, and its efficient use, these issues remain a topic of ongoing debate.

The term "labor resources" was first introduced into the field of science in 1922 by the Russian scholar S. Strumilin, who provided a scientific and economic basis for the concept. S.G. Strumilin defined labor resources based on the socio-economic conditions of his time, presenting them as the aggregate of the non-economically active workforce that could be planned for in the economy.

In the present day, however, the concept of labor has become broader and more complex in its interpretation. Globally, labor resources—or the workforce—vary depending on population size and the various sectors of economic activity. Currently, the total number of labor resources worldwide exceeds 3.5 billion people. More than half of them are distributed between developed countries and emerging market economies. For example, China has the largest labor force in the world, with more than 800 million people; India has approximately 580 million; the United States about 170 million; Indonesia around 145 million; and Brazil over 120 million. Countries such as Russia, Japan, Mexico, Bangladesh, and Pakistan each possess around 80–90 million labor resources.

Labor resources refer to the total number of economically active individuals in a society who are capable of working. According to the legislation of Uzbekistan, labor resources include men aged 16 to 60 and women aged 16 to 58. Additionally, labor resources also include citizens of retirement age who are still employed, individuals under the age of 16 who are legally working, and young people who have graduated from higher or vocational education institutions and entered the labor market.

Labor resources and related concepts have been scientifically studied by both foreign and Uzbek economists and are widely used as economic terms. In particular, R.P. Kolosova and G.G. Melikyan¹ define labor resources as “the part of a country's population that, due to their psycho-physical and intellectual qualities, is capable of producing material goods or services and consists of the able-bodied population.”

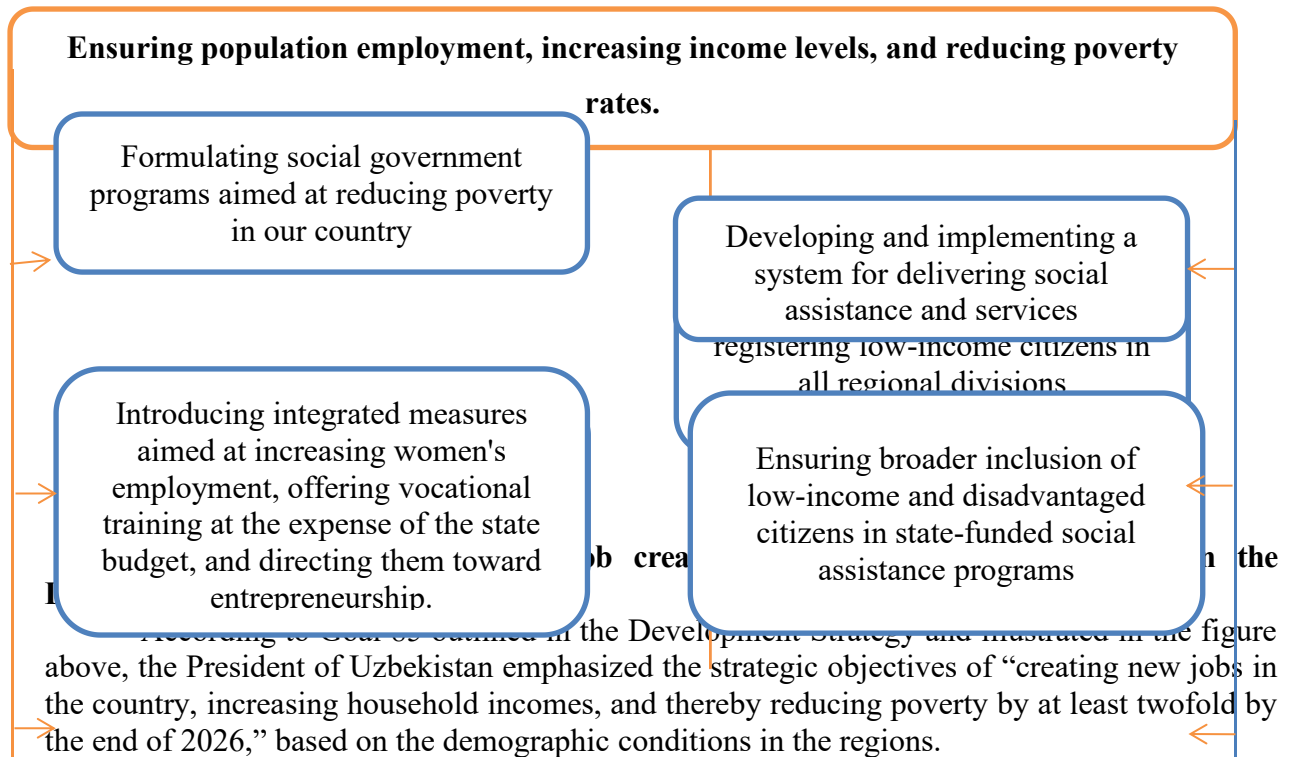
Based on this definition, the authors imply that labor resources encompass both individuals actively engaged in the economy and those who possess labor potential—meaning both the employed and the unemployed who are capable of working. In other words, labor resources consist of both actual and potential workers.

It is worth emphasizing that, by thoroughly analyzing the complex global processes and the developmental path our country has undergone, significant reforms have been undertaken to further improve the well-being of the population, transform economic sectors, intensify entrepreneurship, ensure the full protection of human rights and interests, and develop an active civil society.

To determine the priority areas of these reforms, the President of the Republic adopted Presidential Decree No. PF-60 on January 28, 2022. As a result, the “Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026,” consisting of seven priority directions, was developed.²

¹ Колосова Р.П., Меликьян Г.Г. “Занятость, рынок труда и социально-трудовые отношения” Учебно-методическое пособие, ТЕИС, 2008 г., 458 стр.

² Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-60 dated January 28, 2022 “On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026”



According to goals outlined in the Development Strategy and illustrated in the figure above, the President of Uzbekistan emphasized the strategic objectives of “creating new jobs in the country, increasing household incomes, and thereby reducing poverty by at least twofold by the end of 2026,” based on the demographic conditions in the regions.

The development of labor resources, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is directly linked to the demographic situation of each region. Young people, in particular, have greater access to employment opportunities, which contributes to increasing the volume of labor resources.

Various economic schools offer differing theoretical approaches regarding labor resources and their role in the economic system. Each approach evaluates labor from the perspective of its essence, its impact on economic efficiency, and its function in production.

Representatives of the classical economic school, such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, consider labor to be the main source of a nation’s wealth. In their view, it is through labor activity that material wealth is created, leading to economic development. In this context, labor is interpreted as the driving force of the economy.

The Marxist approach, on the other hand, provides a deeper philosophical and economic foundation by viewing labor as the sole and primary source of value. In Karl Marx’s theory, labor resources are seen as objects of exploitation, and surplus value is generated through their efforts. This approach holds an important place in analyzing socio-economic relations.

Neoclassical economists, such as Paul Samuelson, regard labor as one of the fundamental factors of production and interpret it as a mechanism for achieving market equilibrium. They argue that optimal employment and wage levels in the labor market can be achieved through a balance between labor supply and demand.

³Author’s development

Supporters of the human capital theory, including Gary Becker and others, advocate a qualitative approach to labor resources. According to this theory, the economic value of labor depends on individuals' level of education, professional skills, and health. It is argued that improving knowledge and skills increases the productivity of labor resources in production. This approach is especially relevant in today's innovation-driven economy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the theoretical foundations for the effective use of labor resources have been established in our country. In recent years, Uzbekistan has implemented a series of reforms aimed at improving labor market efficiency and ensuring employment. These reforms include training in modern professions, increasing job creation, managing labor migration, and introducing innovative technologies.

As a result of these reforms, notable progress has been made: The unemployment rate, which stood at 8.8% in 2023, decreased to 7.9% in 2024. Over the past three years, more than 200,000 citizens have received vocational training at professional training centers. In 2024 alone, more than 250,000 new jobs were created specifically to increase women's employment. New jobs are being established in manufacturing and service sectors, especially in IT and industrial zones.

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