

THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF STATE POLICY ON ENSURING EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation: This study examines the principal directions of Uzbekistan's state policy aimed at improving employment levels and strengthening the social protection of the unemployed. It reveals emerging approaches focused on enhancing human capital development and promoting active measures for employment. The authors argue that, rather than prioritising passive benefit schemes, current policy should emphasise retraining and vocational education. The novelty of the research lies in demonstrating the integration of active employment mechanisms with social protection, which is shaping a new policy model within the digital economy.

Keywords: labour market, employment, social protection, unemployment, human capital, active employment policy.

Аннотация: В настоящем исследовании анализируются основные направления государственной политики Узбекистана, направленные на повышение уровня занятости и усиление социальной защиты безработных. Рассматриваются новые подходы, ориентированные на развитие человеческого капитала и стимулирование активных мер занятости. Авторы подчёркивают, что вместо пассивных пособий приоритет следует отдавать профессиональному обучению и переподготовке кадров. Научная новизна исследования заключается в выявлении интеграции механизмов активной занятости с системой социальной защиты, что формирует новую модель политики в условиях цифровой экономики.

Ключевые слова: рынок труда, занятость, социальная защита, безработица, человеческий капитал, политика активной занятости.

Introduction

Employment and social protection constitute fundamental pillars of Uzbekistan's socio-economic stability [1,page 72]. Demographic trends, structural transformation of the economy, and limited job availability necessitate continuous improvement of public policy. The object of this study is the labour market of Uzbekistan, while its subject concerns state policies on employment and social protection. The main purpose of the research is to analyse modern models of employment policy and their integration with social protection systems. The research tasks include:

1. Examining the theoretical foundations of employment policy;
2. Analysing practical measures implemented in Uzbekistan;
3. Comparing active employment models with social protection systems.

Literature Review

Both Uzbek and international scholars have proposed varying approaches to employment policy and mechanisms of social protection [2,page 68][3,page 104][4, page 54]. Shodmonov (2005) emphasises that labour resources constitute a strategic driver of economic development rather than a passive factor [2,page 67]. Xoliqova Lola (2024) highlights human capital as a decisive determinant of economic growth [3,page 106].

Foreign research, including the work of Akhtar et al. (2021), evaluates socio-economic measures to mitigate adverse effects impacting labour markets, acknowledging the interplay between social protection and unemployment reduction [4]. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan's policy practice features distinctive initiatives such as the "Iron Register" "Youth Register" and "Women's Register" which promote active employment measures [5,page 56].

Unlike previous studies focused predominantly on welfare payments, this research underscores an integrated approach that prioritises human capital development alongside active employment promotion.

Analysis and Findings

From a theoretical perspective, Uzbekistan's employment policy prioritises developing labour as an economically productive and competitive asset. As Shodmonov (2005) asserts, labour should not merely be regarded as a passive resource but as an active contributor to value creation [2,page 64]. Consequently, employment measures must extend beyond job creation to include efficient labour allocation, increased productivity, and professional skill development.

Xoliqova Lola (2024) argues that human capital should be treated as an investment producing long-term economic returns. Accordingly, labour market policies should prepare individuals to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving economy rather than simply provide wage-based employment.

From a practical perspective, the period after 2016 marks a transition in Uzbekistan's employment policies, moving from passive welfare systems to active labour market measures. This shift includes the expansion of vocational training centres, digital skills programmes, and targeted grants for youth and women [5,page 87]. These initiatives do not merely offer employment, but also facilitate adaptation to market conditions.

Social protection mechanisms have similarly evolved to complement active employment policies. For instance:

The "Iron Register" identifies vulnerable households and facilitates employment measures;

The "Youth Register" supports skill development, vocational training, and start-up initiatives;

The "Women's Register" focuses on increasing female labour market participation [5, page 89].

Overall, Uzbekistan is forming a new employment model that integrates social protection with labour market preparedness, strengthening both economic and social outcomes.

Uzbekistan's contemporary employment policy is increasingly centred on human capital development. Rather than relying on passive unemployment benefits, the system prioritises vocational training and retraining aimed at enhancing labour market competitiveness.

a. Creation of Digital Platforms: Expand employment and vocational training via online platforms integrating remote learning with practical training modules.

b. Support for Start-ups and Innovation Grants: Encourage youth entrepreneurship and innovation to stimulate job creation and diversify the labour market.

c. Introduction of Personal Development Indices: Create individual indicator systems to monitor skill levels, competencies, and work performance within labour statistics.

d. Strengthening Public-Private Cooperation: Implement mentorship and vocational partnership programmes with the private sector to align training with real labour market needs.

These measures would enable employment policy to align not only with economic priorities, but also with social, innovative, and digital development imperatives.

References

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