

SOCIAL CHANGES IN THE CITY OF QARSHI

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Abstract

This article analyzes the social development of the city of Qarshi during the years of independence.

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Introduction

In the years of independence, a unique and appropriate economic model was established, aiming to develop all sectors of the national economy—particularly heavy and light industry, and consumer goods production—without reducing output. A market-oriented program of economic reforms was developed.

Through the analysis of the social progress in the southern region of the Republic, namely Qashqadaryo region, during the years of independence, it became possible to study the broad-scale reforms being implemented in the country and their outcomes. Qashqadaryo region holds one of the leading positions in the republic due to its strategic location and potential.

The social and economic, cultural development of Qashqadaryo and the measures taken in various directions, along with their results, have not been specially studied in local or national press publications. Moreover, the region holds a leading position in attracting foreign investments and in socio-economic and cultural development.

In the early years of independence, fundamental reforms were carried out in the social sphere. Significant changes took place in public education, healthcare, culture and sports, social protection, and employment. As a result of the educational reforms, for the first time in its history, the people gained access to a national schooling system.

A number of positive steps were taken to strengthen the material and technical base of the education system in Qashqadaryo, including building new schools and equipping them with modern technology.

With the establishment of state independence in Uzbekistan, great opportunities for the development of science were opened. The country's progress has largely depended on social development—namely the material well-being of the population, social security, healthcare, and the organization of a sound social protection system. In independent Uzbekistan, this sector has become one of the top priorities of state policy, and strong reforms have been implemented to ensure its development.

In this regard, it is appropriate to quote the First President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov: “One of the most important principles of Uzbekistan's path of renewal and progress is to carry out strong social policy at all stages of transition to a market economy. All other principles are subordinated to solving social tasks and establishing firm guarantees for social protection.”



This demonstrates that the main goal of the state is the rational implementation of social duties. President Islam Karimov also emphasized that the social policy being carried out in the country has proven to be effective: "... carrying out a strong social policy, implementing reforms step-by-step and carefully, especially during the global financial and economic crisis, once again shows their relevance and importance." As evidence of the justification of these ideas, more than half of the state budget has been allocated to the social sector since independence.

According to the Presidential Decree "On measures to improve the process of developing and implementing master plans for cities, towns, and rural settlements," construction activities were carried out in Qarshi based on the city's master plan developed on September 13, 2013. The plan included the construction of 9- and 4-story apartment buildings, 2–3-story buildings, and separate 1–2-story residential buildings. Based on population in each district, the plan also included the creation of schools, kindergartens, community centers, and small parks. A protected area was proposed around the historical-architectural part of the city. Erecting structures or advertisements that did not conform to the historical surroundings would be restricted. Automobile roads and transport infrastructure (bus stations, terminals, and service facilities) would undergo improvements.

Expansion of main roads and connection to bypass roads was also planned to facilitate travel to other regional settlements such as Shahrisabz, G'uzor, Koson, and Yangi Nishon. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited the "Qarshi LezEr" joint venture in Qarshi and reviewed several promising projects for developing the leather and footwear industry, producing fruits and vegetables, creating logistics centers, and establishing vineyards in Yakkabog', Kitob, and Shahrisabz districts. The leather and footwear industry in Qashqadaryo plays an important role in the processing of locally produced raw leather. For this purpose, an investment program with 18 projects worth a total of \$12.9 million was developed for implementation during 2017–2018.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev approved the Strategy of Action on Five Priority Areas of Development of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021 (February 7, 2017). The fourth direction of the strategy focuses on social development, including:

- Sustainable increase in employment and real income of the population;
- Improvement of social protection and healthcare, and enhancement of women's socio-political activity;
- Implementation of targeted housing programs, development and modernization of road, utility, and social infrastructure to improve living conditions;
- Advancement of education and science;
- Improvement of youth policy.

These directions indicate the significant role of the social sphere in state policy. After gaining independence in 1991, new economic relations were formed in Qarshi. Social infrastructure and services were reformed to meet the demands of the market economy. Although this process created certain difficulties, it gave impetus to social development. Programs aimed at reviving national values, reforming the education system, ensuring religious freedom, and fostering national pride were implemented. Many new schools, higher education institutions, and cultural centers were built in Qarshi. The city's master plan led to the construction of roads, parks, community centers, and other social facilities. Several programs were implemented to increase women's employment, teach them vocational skills, and encourage youth participation



in social projects. Notable initiatives like the “Youth Union” and “Women’s Register” achieved significant results.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized: “The wide-ranging reforms being carried out in our country are being supported by the people. The initial results of these changes are clearly visible in the lives and daily routines of our citizens. Our people’s social activity and confidence in the future are growing.”

Indeed, socio-cultural activities are improving, and the effectiveness of ideological and spiritual work is contributing to positive changes in individual thinking.

Thus, during the years of independence, significant social transformations have taken place in the southern regions of Uzbekistan. In Qashqadaryo, social protection—an essential principle of market economy—has been continuously strengthened. During years themed as “Year of Prosperous Neighborhoods,” “Year of Honoring the Elderly,” “Healthy Generation,” “Year of Sponsors and Doctors,” and “Year of Social Protection,” major efforts were made in the region to improve the well-being of the population, strengthen public health, promote a healthy lifestyle, and care for vulnerable groups.

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