

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN: HISTORY, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF BUKHARA REGION)

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Abstract

This article analyzes the key changes, reforms, stages of development, problems, and solutions in the higher education system of Uzbekistan, particularly in the Bukhara region, during the years of independence. The article also provides detailed information on the formation processes and future prospects of the national model of higher education using the example of the Bukhara region.

Keywords: Bukhara region, higher education, education reforms, quality of education, scientific potential, university, professor-teacher, bachelor, master's student, institute.

Introduction

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, after independence, fundamental reforms were carried out in all spheres, including the higher education system. During the years of independence, the higher education system has undergone a process of serious reforms and transformations. A number of measures were taken to form a national education model, improve the quality of personnel, develop scientific potential, digitalize educational institutions, and integrate into the international educational space. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, along with all other spheres, the renewal of the national education system based on world educational standards, the training of highly qualified personnel, and the enhancement of scientific potential have been elevated to the level of state policy. The Bukhara region is also actively participating in these processes. Bukhara region, with its historical, scientific, and spiritual heritage, occupies an important place in the country's education system.

Main Part. Consistent work is being carried out in our country to provide young people with quality higher education and train specialists who keep pace with progress. Reforms in the field of higher education were primarily aimed at increasing enrollment, improving the financial condition of institutes and universities, and providing material support to professors and teachers. In the 1992-1993 academic year, 44 thousand applicants were admitted to higher educational institutions of the republic, and more than 60 thousand specialists were trained in various fields. [2;127]

According to 1996 data, there were 55 higher educational institutions in Uzbekistan. In particular, 16 universities, 7 medical, 6 pedagogical, 4 agricultural, 3 cultural, 1 railway, 1 communications, and other institutes operated. A total of 317 thousand students studied in them.



In particular, 176 thousand of them are full-time students. 25 thousand teachers worked in the higher education system. Among them were 1,091 Doctors of Science and 11,000 Candidates of Science. [2;127]

According to 2020 data, over the past 5 years, 12 Presidential decrees, 65 Presidential resolutions, 169 Cabinet of Ministers resolutions, 66 departmental documents, 1 law, a total of 313 regulatory legal acts have been adopted to improve the higher education system. Over the past five years, enormous work has been carried out in our country to further develop and raise the higher education system to a qualitatively new level. Quotas for bachelor's, master's, and correspondence forms of education have been increased, and evening and distance learning programs have been introduced. Admission parameters to higher education have been increased by 2.5 times, and the level of youth enrollment in higher education has been increased from 9 to 30 percent. 549]

Students of our republic's schools are also successfully participating in subject Olympiads held in foreign countries. In the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 academic years, 36 of our students became winners of world science olympiads. Winners of the final stage of republican and international subject Olympiads and student sports competitions are admitted to the relevant higher educational institutions without entrance exams. For example, in 1999, 50 winners of the Republican Science Olympiad, 36 winners of the International Science Olympiad, and 29 winners of the Republican Spartakiad were awarded such a privilege.[1; 17].

In order to determine the priorities of reforming the higher education system in the country, raising the personnel training process to a qualitatively new level, modernizing higher education, and developing the social sphere and sectors of the economy based on advanced educational technologies, the Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 has been approved and is currently being implemented. [12;2]

As a result of the reforms carried out in the republic over the past 3 years, the number of higher educational institutions has reached 132 (77 in 2016), of which 99 are local and 33 are foreign higher educational institutions and their branches. The admission quota has been increased from 66 thousand to 181 thousand. The material and technical base of higher educational institutions has been strengthened. Within the framework of joint educational programs with foreign countries, training of specialists in 64 new professions has been established. The salaries of professors and teachers have been increased by an average of 3.5 times. [13;4]

According to 2007 data, the quality of higher education is ensured by the introduction of state educational standards in 149 bachelor's and 650 master's programs. [9;126]

In order to create conveniences for the employed population to receive higher education, part-time forms of education have been introduced in 71 higher educational institutions and evening forms in 18. An increase in the number of students studying in higher educational institutions by 2.2 times was achieved (if in 2016 268.3 thousand students studied, then in 2020 590.1 thousand students are studying). [14;5]

According to 2007 data, 23.4 thousand professors and teachers work in the country's higher education system. Of these, 6.5% are professors and doctors of science, 30.1% are associate professors and candidates of science. [9;126]

In this process, the main attention is paid to the level of growth of the scientific potential of universities. In particular, according to the results of the national rating published in 2021, the



scientific potential of higher educational institutions has increased by an average of 4.2 percent over the past three years. The number of teachers with the academic degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) or the title of professor has reached 2477, and the number of teachers with the academic degree of Candidate of Sciences (PhD) or the title of Associate Professor has reached 8710. The number of professors and teachers who have received PhD or DSc degrees from universities included in the list of the world's top 1000 has reached 450. [7;1]

2011-2016 was a period of certain changes in the higher education system in the direction of improving quality, improving management, and fundamentally updating the content of education. In this process, certain reforms were carried out in higher educational institutions of the country, including in the Bukhara region.

Programs aimed at improving the quality of education have been launched at Bukhara State University and other higher educational institutions. During this period, taking into account the needs of the demand market, new areas of education and specialties were created. In particular, bachelor's and master's programs in such modern professions as tourism, ecology, information technology, finance, and banking have been opened. [96; [64].

The number of future bachelors and master's students studying in 62 higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan in the 2003-2004 academic year amounted to 254,400 people. 1,8486 professors and teachers are employed, of which 1,462 are Doctors of Science and 7,201 are Candidates of Science. [10;372]

Higher educational institutions of the Bukhara region tried to expand international cooperation. Educational programs have been developed in cooperation with countries such as Turkey, Russia, Germany, and Korea, and student and teacher exchanges have been established. However, this process was not yet comprehensive. During 2017-2025, new higher educational institutions, branches of foreign universities, and private universities were established in the Bukhara region. In particular: The Bukhara Engineering and Technological Institute was developed on a new modern basis. Branches of foreign universities have begun operating (for example, the Bukhara branch of the Tashkent Chemical-Technological Institute). The number of private universities has increased. This process played an important role in attracting the general public to higher education and training qualified personnel.

It is also worth noting the qualitative changes in the activities of higher educational institutions in our country. Based on the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Measures to Strengthen the Material and Technical Base of Higher Educational Institutions and Radically Improve the Quality of Training Highly Qualified Specialists" dated May 20, 2011, more than 277 million soums were allocated for the implementation of the program requirements for 2011-2016, which testifies to the scale of work in the field of higher education. [6;64]

Until 2020, there were 114 higher educational institutions, of which 93 are local and 21 are foreign higher educational institutions and their branches. In particular, over the past 3 years, 6 new higher educational institutions, 17 branches, and 14 branches of foreign higher educational institutions have been created. [3;282]

Starting from the 2018-2019 academic year, part-time education was introduced in 52 higher educational institutions, evening education in 9 higher educational institutions, and second higher education in 43 higher educational institutions in part-time form. [5;115]



According to 2016 data, 3 higher educational institutions operate in the city of Bukhara: Bukhara State University, Bukhara Engineering and Technological Institute, Bukhara Medical Institute and 2 branches (Bukhara branch of the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration, Bukhara branch of the Tashkent State Dental Institute), as well as the Bukhara branch of the Uzbek Research Institute of Cotton Growing. [4;419]

During the period of the Action Strategy, according to 2022 data, a number of effective measures were taken to reform the higher education system. Within the framework of joint educational programs with foreign countries, the training of specialists in 64 new professions has been established. The number of higher educational institutions in the 2016/2017 academic year was 70, and in the 2021/2022 academic year - 154. Today, the number of higher educational institutions has increased almost 2.5 times and reached 186. 31 of them are branches of leading universities and institutes of the world. [15;4]

Currently, the following higher educational institutions operate in the Bukhara region: Bukhara State University, Bukhara State Technical University, Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute, Bukhara State Medical Institute, Asian International University, Zarmed University, Bukhara University of Innovations, Bukhara University of Innovative Education and Medicine, Bukhara Institute of Psychology and Foreign Languages. [11;2]

During the years following independence, the higher education system in the Bukhara region has undergone a path of fundamental change and gradual development. During this period, the formation of a national educational model, the opening of new educational institutions, digitalization, and the development of international cooperation served to raise higher education in the Bukhara region to a new level. At the same time, existing problems - shortcomings in the quality of education, material and technical base, science, and employment - still await solutions. To overcome these problems, a systematic approach, effective interaction between the public and private sectors, and the use of international experience are necessary.

The following recommendations are important for ensuring the future development of higher education in the Bukhara region: adaptation of the educational process to market requirements; support for research work and adaptation to world standards; improvement of conditions for teachers and students; full implementation of digital technologies in education.

In conclusion, the higher education system in the Bukhara region underwent significant changes from 1991 to 2025. Now the main task is to deepen these reforms, bring the quality of education to the international level, and create equal opportunities for all young people.

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