

MAHALLA AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN YOUTH UPBRINGING

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Abstract

This article provides a scientific analysis of the role of the mahalla institution in public administration and society, as well as its significance in the upbringing of youth in the context of New Uzbekistan. The article reveals the functional importance of the mahalla in developing civil society, ensuring social stability, and addressing youth-related issues at the local level. It also highlights the strengthening of the legal status of the mahalla institution, the expansion of its powers, and its transformation within the system of social governance.

Keywords

Mahalla, civil society, self-governance, ensuring social stability, population issues, social protection, social institution, state, society.

Introduction: Today, as Uzbekistan enters a new stage of development, the idea of “New Uzbekistan” requires the implementation of comprehensive reforms in all spheres of state and public life. In this process, the mahalla institution plays a decisive role. Indeed, the mahalla is a unique self-governing system of our people, a center of spirituality, and a social support structure that has been formed over centuries. The mahalla has historically developed on the basis of traditions such as kindness, solidarity, neighborliness, and mutual assistance. It is not only a territorial unit but also a center of upbringing, supervision, and support. The mahalla is considered the most important social structure in society for strengthening peace and harmony, mutual respect, kindness and solidarity, preserving national traditions and values, ensuring family cohesion, educating a healthy and well-rounded generation, and resolving the daily problems of the population. In recent years, the legal status of the mahalla institution has been strengthened, its powers have been significantly expanded, and its responsibilities have increased. In the context of New Uzbekistan, the mahalla performs important tasks such as resolving citizens’ issues on the spot, supporting youth and women, reducing poverty, and developing entrepreneurship. Through the mahalla, communication between the state and the people is strengthened, ensuring an environment of social justice and stability. One of the priority directions of New Uzbekistan’s development is the expansion of openness in public administration and increasing citizen participation, and in this process, the role of the mahalla institution is becoming even more significant. In particular, in the implementation of the principle of “for human dignity,” the mahalla serves as an important link between the state and society. In conclusion, the mahalla institution plays a vital role in strengthening social stability, improving governance efficiency, and ensuring the effective upbringing of youth in Uzbekistan. Its growing legal status and expanding functions demonstrate that it has become an indispensable element of the modern civil society system in New Uzbekistan.

Literature review and methods: During the research process, methods of historicity, systematic analysis, logical analysis, and comparative analysis were used. In addition, the modern functions of the mahalla institution were studied based on the analysis of normative-legal documents, scientific literature, and official sources. The history of the mahalla dates back to ancient times. According to historical sources, at the archaeological site of Sopollitepa, which belongs to the Bronze Age, eight families lived. They were united not only by tribal relations but also by production interests. Later, more than 100 families joined them based on a patriarchal



system. Large family communities were led by elected elders. The elders, in turn, were united into a council of senior elders. Generally, elders resolved all issues related to the life of the community or village through the supreme council. From the 3rd century BC to the beginning of the 5th century AD, in the Fergana (Parkana) state, the council of elders also performed important functions. The council mainly dealt with issues such as peace agreements, appointment of ministers and taxes, declaration of war, and mobilization for public works. Literature also provides information that mahallas have a history of several thousand years. For example, Narshakhi, in his work "History of Bukhara", noted that there were several mahallas in Bukhara more than 1100 years ago. Alisher Navoi, in his work "Hayrat ul-abror", described the mahalla as "a city within a city," and mentioned that the city of Herat consisted of mahallas equivalent to 100 small towns. Mahallas flourished during the era of Amir Temur. During this period, mahallas were formed based on professions and were named accordingly. For example: jewelry-making, copper-smithing, leather-working, knife-making, spoon-making, blacksmithing, saddle-making, horseshoe-making, and others. In ancient times, the mahalla functioned as a specific form of local governance. Its administration was carried out on a community basis, and it had its own unwritten internal rules that were considered binding for everyone. The mahalla is not only a small administrative unit but also a community of people united by a common way of life, values, traditions, and customs. Throughout different historical stages, depending on changes in political systems and eras, the functions of the mahalla have also evolved. As a social structure, the mahalla has passed through several stages of development. After Uzbekistan gained independence, attitudes toward mahallas changed fundamentally. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Law "On Self-Governance Bodies of Citizens" adopted in September 1993, mahallas were given legal status and included in the local governance system. On April 14, 1999, a new version of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Self-Governance Bodies of Citizens" was adopted. This law marked a fundamental turning point in the activity of self-governance institutions. Article 7 of the law clearly stated that citizens' self-governance bodies are not part of state power institutions. Today, the social significance of the mahalla in Uzbekistan is increasing. In particular, comprehensive measures are being implemented to transform the mahalla into the main link of public administration and social control, to strengthen its role in society, and to expand the capacity of state representatives working at the mahalla level in resolving local issues effectively and in a timely manner.

As a self-governing body of citizens, the mahalla actively participates in all spheres of public life. Through the mahalla, population needs are identified, and targeted solutions to social problems are made possible. In particular, it has become an important mechanism in supporting low-income families, ensuring employment, and working with youth and women. Efforts are being made to transform the mahalla into an independent and people-oriented structure that serves as a "bridge" between the people and the state, to strengthen its role as the main link of public control, and to ensure active participation of the population in its governance. In this regard, the following words of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev are particularly significant: "The main goal of reforms being implemented in the country is to enhance human dignity and consistently improve the living standards of the population. In this process, the mahalla institution is recognized as the most important link of society, and through conditions in mahallas, the population directly feels the results of state policy and reforms. The family and mahalla institutions play a crucial role in youth upbringing." This idea is of great importance in improving mahalla infrastructure, providing employment for youth, and enhancing the quality of social services. Indeed, youth are the most important resource of society. Their moral, ethical, and intellectual upbringing is a key factor in ensuring social stability and development. In youth education, the family serves as the primary educational environment shaping fundamental values, while the mahalla acts as a social platform for their adaptation to



society. On March 5, 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a resolution “On measures to further improve the system of social protection of the population and widely introduce modern information and communication technologies into the sector.” According to this resolution, a unified electronic database of all mahallas, including their ID identification numbers and territorial boundaries, was introduced in Uzbekistan. The declaration of 2026 as the “Year of Development of the Mahalla and Strengthening of Society” by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan further strengthened the role of the mahalla institution as a source of social solidarity, upbringing, security, and prosperity in New Uzbekistan. This initiative includes comprehensive development of mahalla infrastructure, increasing population income, bringing services closer to citizens, expanding funding mechanisms for youth startup projects at the mahalla level, supporting youth employment, and strengthening youth initiatives. On February 16, 2026, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Decree No. PF-22 “On priority directions of reforms in the implementation of the state program for the Year of Development of the Mahalla and Strengthening of Society and the Strategy ‘Uzbekistan–2030’.” According to this decree, the main priority directions for mahalla development reforms include: launching more than 10,000 production and service projects in mahallas, creating an additional 100,000 jobs, increasing the number of poverty-free and unemployment-free mahallas to 3,500, allocating 20 trillion soums to improve mahalla infrastructure and introduce the image of New Uzbekistan into them, assigning responsibility to all state bodies for rapid resolution of issues in mahallas and introducing 24/7 online monitoring of implementation. It can be noted that the results of reforms implemented in New Uzbekistan are clearly reflected in the life of every mahalla, every household, and every individual. The literature review and methodological analysis show that the mahalla institution has deep historical roots and has evolved into a key socio-administrative structure in modern Uzbekistan. Today, it plays an essential role in governance, social protection, youth upbringing, and ensuring social stability, making it one of the most important pillars of New Uzbekistan’s development model.

Results: In recent years, comprehensive efforts have been carried out to reform the mahalla institution and transform it into an effective system that is closer to the daily life of the population. As a result, the “Seven Pillars” (“yettilik”) system has been introduced in mahallas, and more than 100 types of services such as loans, subsidies, compensation, and financial assistance have been decentralized to the mahalla level. This has contributed to 7.5 million citizens being lifted out of poverty and the unemployment rate being reduced by two times. In addition, the appearance of 3,500 mahallas has been modernized and brought in line with contemporary standards. Through the “Mahalla Seven” system, mechanisms for identifying internal resources of the mahalla and mobilizing them for the provision of social services and assistance have been established. Efforts of state bodies and their representatives at the mahalla level have been unified to ensure timely and effective resolution of local problems. The term of office of mahalla chairpersons has been extended from 3 to 5 years. Under their leadership, a vertical “Seven Pillars” system has been established, and they have been provided with sufficient conditions, resources, and authority. In order to transform every opportunity in the mahalla into a project and create employment opportunities, banking specialists and tax officers have been assigned to mahallas, and special funding has been allocated for infrastructure development. In this regard, the mahalla serves as an important space for the socialization of youth and their adaptation to societal norms. Mahalla activists, elderly people with life experience, and structures such as youth organizations are actively participating in the moral and ethical upbringing of young people. The improvement of the system of working with youth in mahallas is one of the priority directions of the large-scale reforms being implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan. As the most active social group, youth play a decisive role in ensuring the country’s sustainable development and social security. Therefore, effectively organizing work with youth



and fully utilizing the potential of the mahalla institution has become an important task of modern state policy. Various events held in mahallas, including activities within the framework of the Five Important Initiatives, sports competitions, and spiritual-educational meetings, help protect young people from negative influences and guide them toward positive development paths. The results show that the ongoing reforms in the mahalla system have significantly improved social welfare, reduced poverty and unemployment, and strengthened youth development mechanisms. The mahalla has become a key institution in ensuring social stability, economic activity, and the moral upbringing of the younger generation in New Uzbekistan.

Discussion: The family and the mahalla play an extremely important role in youth upbringing. These two environments complement each other in the formation of a child's personality and have a significant impact on their moral, ethical, and social development. While the family serves as the primary environment for raising a person, the mahalla plays a crucial role in preparing young people for society and adapting them to social life. In the conditions of the modern world, the close cooperation of these two institutions is considered an important means of ensuring the moral and ethical maturity of young people. The cooperation between the family and the mahalla further increases the effectiveness of upbringing. When the family and mahalla work in cooperation, supervision and care over young people become stronger. For example, activities such as working with troubled families by mahalla activists, studying youth problems, and guiding them in the right direction produce positive results. At the same time, parents also become more actively involved in mahalla events, taking greater responsibility for the upbringing of their children. The analysis shows that the integration of family and mahalla efforts creates a strong educational environment for youth development. Their effective cooperation ensures better social control, strengthens moral values, and contributes to the formation of responsible and well-rounded young individuals in society.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the development of the mahalla institution and the spiritual and moral upliftment of society are among the key strategic directions in shaping the image and essence of New Uzbekistan. The ongoing reforms clearly demonstrate that the mahalla is no longer only a traditional local self-governing structure, but has become an important socio-spiritual institution that directly influences the quality of life of the population, social stability, and the upbringing of the younger generation. The mahalla, together with the family and educational institutions, forms a unified system of upbringing and socialization of youth. Each of these institutions performs its own specific function: the family provides the primary moral and ethical foundation of the child, educational institutions ensure intellectual development and professional orientation, while the mahalla serves as a social environment that integrates young people into society and strengthens their civic responsibility. Their harmonious interaction ensures the formation of a well-rounded, socially active, and morally mature generation. In modern conditions, special attention is being paid to creating a healthy social environment within mahallas. This includes strengthening mutual respect, solidarity, and cooperation among residents, preventing social problems at an early stage, and supporting vulnerable groups of the population. The implementation of targeted social assistance, youth support programs, and employment initiatives at the mahalla level significantly contributes to improving the quality of life of citizens. Furthermore, the strengthening of family values remains one of the most important priorities in society. The mahalla plays a key role in promoting stability within families, preventing conflicts, and reinforcing traditions of mutual respect and responsibility. In this regard, cooperation between family institutions and mahalla structures ensures a more effective system of social control and moral guidance for young people. Another important aspect is the development of reading culture and intellectual potential among youth. Encouraging book reading, organizing educational events, and supporting cultural and spiritual initiatives within mahallas contribute to the intellectual growth of society. Such efforts help young people



to develop critical thinking, broaden their worldview, and strengthen their moral values. Overall, the mahalla system in New Uzbekistan has become a fundamental pillar of social development, ensuring harmony between the state and society. The continuous strengthening of its role, together with family and educational institutions, creates a solid foundation for raising a spiritually rich, socially responsible, and highly educated generation. This, in turn, serves as a key guarantee for sustainable development and long-term prosperity of the country.

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