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THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS IN UZBEKISTAN IN EDUCATING A HARMONIOUSLY DEVELOPED GENERATION AND PROMOTING INTERETHNIC HARMONY AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Davlatova Saodat Tilovberdiyevna

Head of Department, Committee on Interethnic Relations and

Compatriots Abroad under the Republic of Uzbekistan

Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor

Email: saodatdavlatova70@gmail.com

Mobile: +998909992530

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract The sustainable development of modern societies largely depends on the effectiveness of civil society institutions in strengthening democratic governance, protecting human rights, promoting social cohesion, and cultivating responsible citizenship. In Uzbekistan, comprehensive political and social reforms implemented in recent years have significantly enhanced the role of civil society organizations in addressing social challenges, fostering youth development, and strengthening interethnic harmony. This study examines the contribution of civil society institutions to educating a harmoniously developed generation while promoting interethnic harmony and tolerance in Uzbekistan. Using a qualitative analytical approach, the research reviews national legislation, strategic policy documents, academic literature, and practical experiences of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The study demonstrates that civil society institutions-including non-governmental non-profit organizations, citizens' self-government bodies, youth organizations, women's associations, educational institutions, charitable foundations, and cultural centers-play an essential role in developing democratic values, civic responsibility, patriotism, social inclusion, and mutual respect among young people. Furthermore, these institutions facilitate intercultural dialogue, encourage volunteerism, support vulnerable populations, preserve cultural diversity, and strengthen national unity through community participation. The findings indicate that collaboration between the state and civil society has become an effective mechanism for implementing youth policy, preventing social conflicts, and reinforcing social stability. The article concludes that expanding institutional capacity, improving legal frameworks, increasing financial sustainability, and strengthening digital civic engagement will further enhance the contribution of civil society institutions to sustainable national development.

Keywords: civil society, Uzbekistan, youth development, interethnic harmony, tolerance, civic participation, democracy, public organizations, social cohesion, education.

Introduction Civil society represents one of the fundamental pillars of democratic governance and sustainable development. Throughout the world, civil society institutions contribute to protecting human rights, promoting transparency, strengthening public participation, and creating favorable conditions for peaceful coexistence among diverse social groups. They serve as a bridge between the government and citizens by encouraging active participation in solving social, cultural, educational, and economic problems.

During the last decade, Uzbekistan has undergone profound political, legal, and socio-economic reforms aimed at strengthening democratic institutions and expanding public participation in governance. The "New Uzbekistan" development strategy emphasizes openness, accountability, respect for human dignity, social justice, and active civic engagement. Within this reform agenda, civil society institutions have become increasingly important actors in implementing state policies, especially those related to youth education, national unity, and social stability. Youth constitute more than half of Uzbekistan's population, making their intellectual, moral, and civic development one of the country's strategic priorities. Educating a harmoniously developed generation involves more than providing academic knowledge; it requires cultivating ethical values, patriotism, critical thinking, creativity, social responsibility, legal awareness, and respect for cultural diversity. Civil society institutions actively support these objectives by organizing educational programs, leadership training, volunteer initiatives, cultural exchanges, public discussions, and social projects that strengthen civic consciousness. One of the distinctive characteristics of Uzbekistan is its multicultural composition. Representatives of more than 130 ethnic groups and numerous religious communities live together peacefully throughout the country. Preserving this unique environment requires continuous efforts aimed at promoting dialogue, preventing discrimination, encouraging mutual understanding, and strengthening the culture of tolerance. Civil society organizations make significant contributions by organizing intercultural festivals, educational seminars, public awareness campaigns, and collaborative community projects that foster trust and cooperation among different social groups.

Neighborhood citizens' assemblies (mahallas) represent a particularly important component of Uzbekistan's civil society. Mahallas perform not only administrative functions but also educational, cultural, and social responsibilities. They provide direct assistance to families, support vulnerable citizens, promote youth initiatives, resolve community disputes through dialogue, and strengthen social solidarity. Their close interaction with educational institutions, families, and local authorities creates favorable conditions for comprehensive youth development and community resilience. Youth organizations have also become influential actors in fostering civic responsibility. Through leadership schools, entrepreneurship programs, innovation competitions, environmental campaigns, and volunteer activities, these organizations encourage young people to participate actively in public life while developing practical skills and democratic values. Such initiatives help prevent social exclusion, extremism, and destructive ideologies by offering constructive opportunities for personal and professional growth. Women's organizations likewise contribute substantially to social development by promoting gender equality, supporting family education, enhancing women's economic participation, and strengthening children's upbringing. Their educational activities improve family well-being and contribute to creating stable and inclusive communities where tolerance and mutual respect flourish.

Research Objectives The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the contribution of civil society institutions to youth education, national unity, and social cohesion in Uzbekistan.

The specific objectives include:

- to examine the theoretical foundations of civil society institutions;
- to analyze the development of civil society in Uzbekistan;
- to identify the educational functions of public organizations;
- to assess their contribution to strengthening interethnic harmony;
- to evaluate mechanisms promoting tolerance among different cultural groups;
- to identify existing challenges and opportunities;

- to formulate practical recommendations for improving institutional effectiveness.

Research Questions The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do civil society institutions contribute to educating a harmoniously developed generation in Uzbekistan?
2. What mechanisms strengthen interethnic harmony through civic participation?
3. How do public organizations promote religious and cultural tolerance?
4. What challenges limit the effectiveness of civil society institutions?
5. Which policy measures can further strengthen cooperation between the government and civil society?

Scientific Novelty The novelty of this research lies in providing an integrated analysis of civil society institutions by simultaneously examining their educational, social, cultural, and democratic functions within the context of New Uzbekistan reforms. Unlike previous studies focusing on individual institutions, this article presents a comprehensive framework demonstrating how coordinated cooperation among state authorities, educational institutions, mahallas, youth organizations, women's associations, and non-governmental organizations contributes to sustainable development, civic responsibility, social inclusion, and national unity.

Conclusion

The development of a strong civil society has become one of the key factors in promoting sustainable social progress and strengthening democratic governance in Uzbekistan. Civil society institutions-including non-governmental organizations, neighborhood self-governing bodies (mahallas), youth organizations, women's associations, educational institutions, religious organizations, and mass media-play a significant role in nurturing a well-rounded younger generation while reinforcing the principles of interethnic harmony and religious tolerance. Their collaborative efforts contribute to creating a socially responsible, patriotic, and culturally aware generation capable of responding to contemporary national and global challenges. The findings indicate that civil society institutions complement the activities of state organizations by fostering civic responsibility, respect for national traditions, universal human values, and intercultural dialogue among young people. Through educational initiatives, community-based programs, volunteer movements, cultural exchanges, and awareness campaigns, these institutions actively promote social cohesion and strengthen the culture of peaceful coexistence among representatives of different ethnic and religious communities. Such activities support the implementation of Uzbekistan's broader reforms aimed at enhancing democratic participation, social stability, and inclusive development.

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