



Abstract

In this article, the author examines the material and technical condition of orphanages in Uzbekistan during the years of independence, the living conditions created for orphans and children deprived of parental care who are raised in these institutions, as well as the problems that emerged in orphanages during the early years of independence and the state policies implemented to address them. The article also discusses the significance of adequate material and technical conditions in orphanages for the lives, upbringing, and well-being of orphans and children deprived of parental care.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, orphanage, orphans, children deprived of parental care, social orphanhood, State Program.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada muallif mustaqillik yillarida O'zbekistonda Mehribonlik uylarining moddiy-texnik axvoli, ushbu muassasada tarbiyalanayotgan yetim va ota-ona qaramog'idan mahrum bo'lgan bolalar uchun yaratilgan sharoitlar, mustaqillikning dastlabki yillarida Mehribonlik uylarida yuzaga kelgan muammolar hamda ularni bartaraf etish bo'yicha davlatning amalga oshirgan siyosati haqida fikr-mulohaza yuritgan. Shuningdek, Mehribonlik uylarida moddiy-texnik sharoitning qanchalik yaxshi bo'lishi unda tarbiyalanayotgan yetim va ota-ona qaramog'idan mahrum bo'lgan bolalar hayotidagi ahamiyati to'g'risidagi mulohazalar berilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: O'zbekiston, Mehribonlik uyi, yetim bolalar, ota-ona qaramog'idan mahrum bo'lgan bola, "ijtimoiy yetim", Davlat dasturi.

Аннотация

В данной статье автор рассматривает материально-техническое состояние детских домов в Узбекистане в годы независимости, условия, созданные для детей-сирот и детей, оставшихся без попечения родителей, воспитывающихся в данных учреждениях, а также проблемы, возникшие в детских домах в первые годы независимости, и государственную политику, направленную на их решение. Кроме того, в статье представлены размышления о значении благоприятных материально-технических условий в детских домах для жизни и воспитания детей-сирот и детей, оставшихся без попечения родителей.

Ключевые слова: Узбекистан, детский дом, дети-сироты, дети, оставшиеся без попечения родителей, «социальное сиротство», Государственная программа.

1. Relevance of the Study

Countries around the world devote considerable attention and care to children, who constitute an essential segment of the population. Children are regarded as the most valuable asset of any society, as they determine its future development and prosperity. Ensuring

children's well-being, education, and upbringing is therefore among the highest priorities of both the state and society. In particular, providing a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for orphans and children deprived of parental care—those who are in special need of state protection, care, and compassion—remains an issue of significant importance.

Children's homes share certain similarities with other public institutions, particularly educational establishments, while also possessing distinctive characteristics. For instance, in all educational institutions, the quality and strength of the material and technical infrastructure have a direct impact on the effectiveness of the educational process. In the case of children's homes, however, such conditions carry even greater significance, as they may become a determining factor in shaping the future lives of their residents. For children living in these institutions, a children's home serves not only as a place for education and upbringing but also as their primary residence until they reach adulthood.

For this reason, the state has undertaken a range of measures aimed at strengthening the material and technical base of children's homes, bringing them into compliance with modern standards, improving living conditions, and enhancing the quality of education and care provided therein. In this regard, during his visit to Children's Home No. 21 in Tashkent on July 28, 2021, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev inspected the conditions created for the children and emphasized the need to further improve the work carried out in such institutions. He aptly noted that “these institutions have financial sponsors, but they also need spiritual mentors. This is both a virtuous and necessary undertaking” [1].

The creation of modern conditions in children's homes and the strengthening of their material and technical infrastructure contribute not only to improving the quality of education and upbringing provided to the residents but also to facilitating their positive socialization and successful integration into society in later life.

2. Research Methods and Literature Review

Studies conducted on the activities of children's homes in Uzbekistan during the years of independence, particularly those located in the Fergana Valley, have primarily examined the participation of their residents in socio-spiritual reforms and their role within state policies addressing global social issues. These aspects have been explored on the basis of documentary and archival sources. Notable contributions to this field have been made by such scholars as Sh. Rakhmatullayev [2], T. Khatamov [3], O. Topildiyev [4], H. U. Khoshimov [5], and A. Nurmatov [6].

The existing body of literature also includes articles, methodological guides, and collections devoted to the activities of children's homes. However, issues such as the historical development of children's homes in the Fergana Valley, the improvement of their institutional activities, the strengthening of legal protection mechanisms, the enhancement of their material and technical infrastructure, and the creation of adequate living and educational conditions for their residents have not been comprehensively studied from a historical perspective.

Therefore, conducting a scholarly historical analysis of these issues remains both relevant and necessary. Such research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolution of children's homes and the state policies aimed at ensuring the welfare and protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care.

3. Research Findings

The state allocates budgetary funds annually to strengthen the material and technical infrastructure of children's homes. In addition, the supplementary financial resources of these institutions may be generated from the following sources:

- payments received from the population and the provision of services;
- charitable donations and voluntary contributions;
- rental income obtained from unused auxiliary premises, facilities, and equipment;
- other miscellaneous revenues [7].

These funds constitute additional financial resources that may be utilized independently by the institution to cover its operational expenses throughout the year. Any remaining funds at the end of the fiscal year, regardless of their source, are not subject to withdrawal and may be spent by the children's home in accordance with its needs and the applicable legislation [8].

During the early years of Uzbekistan's independence, the material and technical condition of children's homes was far from satisfactory. In the period between 1991 and 2000, these institutions faced a number of significant challenges. This period was characterized by economic difficulties, social instability, and limited financial resources resulting from the country's transition to a market economy. Consequently, the infrastructure of many children's homes had become outdated and insufficiently developed, creating obstacles to the provision of adequate living, educational, and developmental conditions for their residents. These shortcomings hindered efforts aimed at improving the upbringing, education, and overall well-being of orphans and children deprived of parental care.

In 1993, the financial authorities conducted an inspection of the budgeting and expenditure practices of 16 children's homes and 71 boarding schools in order to assess their overall condition and operational effectiveness. The findings indicated that the implementation of presidential decrees and salary increases had generally been carried out in a timely manner across the institutions under review. However, a number of deficiencies were identified in the application of the unified tariff system, the phased adjustment of salaries, and the classification of positions and wage scales. As a result, instances of both underpayment and overpayment of salaries were recorded.

In addition to payroll issues, special attention was given to food provision, particularly the extent to which established nutritional standards for children were being observed. An analysis of food expenditures during the first half of 1993 revealed persistent shortages of essential food products in children's homes and boarding schools when compared to officially approved consumption norms. The inspection found deficits of approximately 220 tons of vegetables, 123.2 tons of potatoes, 404.8 tons of fruit, 25.6 tons of butter, 248.2 thousand liters of milk, 378.8 thousand eggs, 78.5 tons of cottage cheese, 22.6 tons of meat, and 156.5 tons of fish. At the same time, certain products were consumed in quantities exceeding the approved norms, including 190.1 tons of bread, 68.7 tons of cereals, legumes, and pasta products, 6.0 tons of vegetable oil, and 2.1 tons of sour cream.

Such shortcomings were observed in children's homes and boarding schools throughout the republic. In particular, shortages of food products were identified during inventory inspections at the Hamza Children's Home, Auxiliary Boarding School No. 13 in Andijan, the Urgut Sanatorium-Forest School in Samarkand Region, the Boysun Children's Home in Surkhandarya Region, several boarding schools in Namangan Region, and Boarding School No. 92 in Bogot District of Khorezm Region.

An inspection of inventory records at Children's Home No. 2 in the city of Andijan revealed discrepancies attributable to warehouse management personnel. The audit identified shortages of food products valued at 950 rubles and 53 kopecks, including wheat groats, animal fat, and vermicelli, as well as surplus goods valued at 5,214 rubles, including cooking oil, sour cream, and butter. These findings pointed to significant deficiencies in inventory management and accounting procedures.

Furthermore, the inspection established that the provision of clothing and soft inventory items intended for children fell substantially below established standards. For example, while the approved norm required 19,289 school uniforms for boys, only 12,512 were available, resulting in a shortage of 6,777 units. The shortage of school uniforms for girls amounted to 1,654 units. Supplies of undershirts and sportswear were also inadequate: the approved norm for undershirts was 16,402 units, whereas only 13,673 were available; similarly, only 1,119 sports suits were available against a required norm of 3,139 units.

These findings demonstrate that during the early years of Uzbekistan's independence, children's homes and boarding schools experienced significant challenges related to financing, food security, inventory management, and the provision of essential clothing and living necessities. Such deficiencies negatively affected the living conditions and welfare of orphans and children deprived of parental care, underscoring the need for comprehensive state measures aimed at improving institutional support and material provision.

At the same time, there were also cases of surplus goods exceeding the established norms, which were mainly supplied to children's homes and boarding schools as humanitarian aid or through sponsorship. According to inspections conducted as of July 1, 1993, children's homes and boarding schools possessed clothing and soft inventory items worth 11,627.4 thousand rubles, totaling 83,337 units. However, 1,505 items, valued at 677.6 thousand rubles, were found to be worn out and unsuitable for use [9].

Due to financial difficulties and economic constraints, significant challenges arose in Uzbekistan, particularly in the Fergana Valley, regarding the modernization of the material and technical base of children's homes and the procurement of new equipment and essential items for children. During this period, budget allocations to many children's homes were reduced, which naturally created difficulties in meeting the basic needs of their residents. It is also noted that at this stage, funding for children's homes was provided exclusively from the state budget, while charitable contributions were virtually absent.

For instance, in 1992 there were 25 children's homes in the republic, occupying a total area of 74,374 m². Of this, dormitory facilities accounted for 23,209 m², while classrooms and activity rooms covered 17,684 m². In addition, there were 22 libraries containing a total of 143,540 books, 23 canteens, 19 workshops, 25 vehicles used for household needs, 16 gym halls, and 12 auxiliary farms.

In the Fergana Valley, children's homes can be further considered separately. In Andijan Region, one children's home had a total area of 1,125 m², including 360 m² of dormitory space and 405 m² of study rooms. Although it had a canteen, workshop, vehicles, and an auxiliary farm, it lacked both a library and a gym hall. The children's home No. 26 in Namangan Region occupied 1,927 m², with 420 m² of dormitory space and 420 m² of study rooms. It had one library containing 3,000 books, as well as a canteen, transport facilities, and a gym hall, but lacked both a workshop and an auxiliary farm. The three children's homes in Fergana Region

occupied a total area of 6,752 m², including 2,600 m² of dormitories and 3,100 m² of study rooms. They collectively had four libraries containing 25,000 books, four canteens, three workshops, four vehicles, one gym hall, and one auxiliary farm [10].

By 1993, further changes were observed in the infrastructure of these institutions. For example, the workshop of the children's home in Andijan was no longer operational. In the children's homes of Fergana Region, the number of libraries, workshops, and vehicles decreased by one unit, while the number of auxiliary farms increased by one unit [11].

To improve the material and technical base of children's homes and ensure their operational expenditures, budgetary funds have been allocated annually based on approved financial estimates. In 1994, a total of 24 children's homes were operating in Uzbekistan, including one in Andijan Region, one in Namangan Region, and three in Fergana Region. In Andijan Region, 94 children were being raised in a children's home; in Namangan Region, the number of residents was 96; and in the three children's homes of Fergana Region, a total of 313 children were under care.

In the same year, the specialized children's home in Andijan Region received 1,427.6 thousand soums from the state budget, the children's home in Namangan Region was allocated 1,736.8 thousand soums, and the three children's homes in Fergana Region received a total of 2,804.2 thousand soums from the state budget [12]. In addition, the children's home in Andijan Region received an additional 184.4 thousand soums from other sources of income.

In Uzbekistan, the government implemented a number of important measures aimed at improving the material and technical infrastructure of children's homes. In order to address the challenges of the early years of independence and to create appropriate conditions for children, several reforms were carried out. In particular, the state undertook renovation and modernization works to improve the physical condition of buildings belonging to children's homes. Dilapidated facilities were repaired, new buildings were constructed, and measures were taken to ensure more comfortable living conditions for residents. Special attention was paid to improving the sanitary and technical conditions of dormitories and classrooms, as well as ensuring stable access to heating, cold water, and electricity.

In addition, financial assistance for upgrading the material and technical base of children's homes was provided by both the state and the private sector. In this regard, the Government of Uzbekistan expanded cooperation with various organizations and allocated funds for the procurement of essential equipment, furniture, medical devices, medicines, and other necessary supplies for children's homes and similar state-run child care institutions. Uzbekistan also collaborated with international organizations, including the United Nations, UNICEF, the International Red Cross, the Red Crescent Movement, and other humanitarian agencies, which contributed essential equipment and assistance for children [12].

From 2000 onwards, the material and technical condition of children's homes in the republic began to improve significantly. By this time, Uzbekistan had largely overcome the early economic crises and had begun to place greater emphasis on social sectors, particularly on the protection of children's rights and the creation of favorable conditions for their upbringing and development.

In this regard, on January 22, 2004, officials from the Andijan City Administration, the City Finance Department, and the City Department of Social Welfare visited Boarding School No. 2 (Children's Home No. 2) in Andijan city in order to examine and analyze its operational

activities, the living conditions created for children, as well as issues related to medical services and supply provision. During the inspection, they studied the organization of the educational and upbringing process, the conditions ensuring the healthy development of children, the state of dormitory facilities, and the level of provision with food and medicines. In addition, attention was paid to the organization of cultural and spiritual activities aimed at ensuring the meaningful leisure time of the children.

As a result of the inspection, several shortcomings were identified. In particular, attention was drawn to issues such as the improvement of the institution's territory, laying of asphalt, organization of summer recreation for children, identification of a permanent sponsoring organization, and increasing children's involvement in sports clubs and extracurricular activities [13].

In Uzbekistan, a number of normative and legal acts have been adopted in order to further improve the material and technical base of children's homes, enhance their functioning, and strengthen legal protection, education, healthcare, and other essential services for orphans and children deprived of parental care. These legal frameworks have played an important role in creating improved living conditions for children under state care, facilitating their social adaptation and preparation for independent life.

In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated October 17, 2008, No. VM-230 "On Approval of the Regulation on Children's Homes," the material and technical base of such institutions is defined as consisting of the following components: necessary buildings and structures, sports grounds and halls, engineering and communication systems, various equipment, transport means, and other material resources used for the effective organization of the educational and upbringing process. The Regulation also stipulates that buildings of children's homes must comply with technical safety standards and sanitary and hygienic requirements, and that their use must be efficient and purpose-oriented.

The financing of these institutions is carried out in accordance with established procedures. The main source of funding is the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In addition, funds may also be attracted from voluntary donations of individuals and legal entities, targeted contributions from various organizations, and other sources not prohibited by law. The activities of children's homes are registered with the relevant financial authorities, and financing is carried out on the basis of approved budget estimates in accordance with legislation.

Budgetary funds allocated by the state must be spent strictly in accordance with the directions specified in the approved estimates and in compliance with established procedures and regulations. The resolution also stipulates that children's homes may independently utilize funds received from additional sources. Any unspent balances at the end of the year, regardless of their origin, are not subject to withdrawal and may be used by the institution in accordance with its needs and in compliance with legislation.

The staffing structure of children's homes is formed in accordance with standard staffing schedules approved by law, and employees' salaries are determined in accordance with applicable regulations. These institutions are also responsible for maintaining financial and statistical reporting approved by authorized state bodies. Monitoring and control of financial and economic activities are carried out by the relevant financial authorities.

In order to provide children under full state care in children's homes with clothing, footwear, and essential supplies, in 2002 a total of 29 types of clothing items, 15 types of equipment, and 2 types of tableware were allocated. By 2008, the provision had increased, and children were supplied with 38 types of clothing and footwear, as well as 11 types of soft furnishings. This clearly demonstrates that over time, the state consistently increased its efforts to meet the material needs of children in residential care institutions.

In addition, all necessary food products for the healthy development of children in children's homes have been regularly provided. For example, in 2011, Children's Home No. 17 in Kokand was supplied with 67 types of food products [14].

There are also several concrete examples of improvements in the material and technical base of children's homes. In certain institutions, reforms and modernization efforts have proven effective, particularly in strengthening infrastructure, creating comfortable living conditions, and ensuring opportunities for the comprehensive development of children.

In 2007, within the framework of the State Program "Year of Social Protection," it was stipulated that a State Program for 2007–2010 would be developed and adopted to increase the level of technical equipment in children's homes and specialized boarding schools, based on preliminary needs assessments. The program included comprehensive reconstruction and renovation of institutions, full provision of newly approved standards of soft furniture, equipment, technical and auxiliary tools, and computer classrooms, as well as the provision of buses manufactured by the Samarkand Automobile Plant for 28 children's homes and 86 boarding schools.

For this purpose, 9,040.2 million soums were allocated from the state budget. In addition, 150.0 million soums were allocated for organizing regular medical examinations and preventive health check-ups for girls living in children's homes, while 10.0 million soums were directed toward ensuring their continuous provision with modern personal hygiene products. Furthermore, 2,800.0 million soums were allocated to create appropriate living and working conditions for graduates of children's homes by establishing dormitories with family-type housing units near potential workplaces, enabling their employment and social integration [15].

In order to ensure the implementation of this resolution, on July 25, 2007, representatives of the General Prosecutor's Office visited Children's Home No. 2 in Andijan Region to examine living conditions and the implementation of the "Year of Social Protection" program. During the visit, they inspected the premises and surrounding areas of the institution and paid special attention to the construction of a new building for the children. On August 21 of the same year, the Andijan Regional Administration held a ceremony to present a vehicle to the children's home to improve living conditions and ensure the implementation of government decisions. Later, on November 12, 2007, members of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, together with representatives of the farming community in the region, visited the institution, met with the children, and provided financial assistance [13].

In 2008, based on the minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Republican Commission for the implementation of the State Program "Year of Youth," an organizational action plan was developed for the execution of program measures. According to paragraph 24 of this plan, a State Program for strengthening the material and technical base of children's homes and specialized boarding schools for 2008–2010 was to be developed and approved.

Paragraph 68 included plans for organizing summer educational camps and preparing capable children from children's homes for higher education during May–June. Paragraph 92 outlined measures to provide health improvement services for 250,000 children during the summer season, including 2,600 children from children's homes in sanatoriums, camps, and recreational facilities. Paragraph 101 specifically addressed the provision of housing for graduates of children's homes who had completed higher and secondary specialized or vocational education institutions, ensuring their social stability and independent living conditions.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that Uzbekistan has consistently focused on the gradual and systematic development of the social sphere. In particular, special attention has been paid to improving the organization and functioning of children's homes established for orphans and children deprived of parental care under full state support, as well as to enhancing their material and technical infrastructure and ensuring the effective organization of educational and upbringing processes.

Since the upbringing and education environment plays a crucial role in the formation of a healthy and fully developed personality, significant importance has been attached to creating appropriate living and learning conditions for children. Accordingly, efforts have been made to ensure that children in children's homes are not isolated from their peers, but instead study and interact together within a shared educational environment. This approach has contributed to their effective social integration, psychological stability, and the development of full social adaptation among children who grow up without a family environment.

Legal frameworks have also been developed to ensure the inclusion of children from children's homes in general education institutions, and based on these regulations, systematic work has been carried out to integrate them into mainstream educational and social institutions.

Moreover, state programs have prioritized increasing the level of technical equipment in children's homes and specialized boarding schools. These programs have included comprehensive reconstruction and renovation of facilities, as well as the provision of newly approved standards of soft furnishings, equipment, technical and auxiliary tools, and fully equipped computer classrooms. These measures have significantly contributed to improving the quality of care, education, and living conditions for children under state guardianship.

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