

Types, Functions, and Organizational-Institutional Foundations of Civil Society Institutions in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: *This article provides information on the areas of activity, various functions, and organizational-institutional foundations of civil society institutions.*

Keywords: *Civil society, non-governmental non-profit organizations, mass media, political parties, national cultural centers, social movements, trade unions, citizens' self-government bodies.*

Nowadays, deepening democratic processes, building a rule-of-law state, and ensuring openness and transparency in society rely heavily on the significant role of civil society institutions. In the development of modern states, civil society emerges not only as a counterbalance to state power but also as its effective partner. Therefore, studying the types, functions, and organizational foundations of civil society institutions is an urgent issue today.

Civil society institutions are a collection of organizations, associations, and structures that operate independently from the state and protect the political, economic, social, and cultural interests of citizens.

In Uzbekistan, civil society institutions have the following main types based on their areas of activity, organizational forms, and functions:

Citizens' self-government bodies play a key role in increasing social activity, improving regional development, resolving social problems, and establishing public oversight.

Political parties represent citizens' political will, participate in elections, and engage in governing society.

Trade unions focus on protecting workers' rights and interests, improving labor conditions, and providing social guarantees.

Non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), public associations, and funds operate in education, healthcare, ecology, legal protection, social security, and other fields. They also carry out socially significant initiatives and support the spiritual and educational development of citizens. Their activities aim at protecting citizens' rights and interests, solving social problems, and contributing to societal development.

Mass media play an important role in ensuring freedom of speech, shaping public opinion, and informing the population about social, political, economic, and cultural events.

Religious organizations and spiritual centers contribute to the implementation of citizens' religious beliefs, promote spiritual values, and improve the moral environment in society.

Regional and national cultural centers protect the interests of representatives of various nations and preserve their cultural heritage.

Social movements and initiative groups are voluntary associations formed to solve particular issues or support reforms.

These institutions fulfill the following functions by raising citizens' political awareness, promoting independent thinking, and helping realize their potential:

Civil society institutions combat human rights violations, provide legal assistance to citizens, and protect their legitimate interests. They strive to reflect the interests of vulnerable groups (such as persons with disabilities, women, and children) in state policy.

Representing and protecting citizens' interests involves broad public participation in decision-making processes, considering their opinions and proposals. This is an integral part of democratic society, ensuring transparency, openness, and fairness in matters directly affecting people's lives and welfare. It also helps strengthen mutual trust between the state and society.

Public oversight helps ensure transparency and accountability of state bodies. Civil society institutions exercise public control over government activities through various events, public discussions, and surveys, demanding openness and transparency of government decisions. This, in turn, helps reduce corruption and bureaucratic obstacles in governance.

Strengthening democratic values fosters respect for the rule of law, human rights, and freedoms. Civil society institutions promote respect for laws, democratic values, and social responsibility through seminars, training, and advocacy, increasing political and legal literacy, and creating a foundation for active citizen participation.

Ensuring social partnership enhances cooperation among the state, business, and civil society. The state cannot solve all social problems alone. Civil society institutions (NGOs, charitable foundations) fill this gap by implementing targeted projects, reducing poverty, raising awareness, and addressing ecological issues.

Spiritual and educational upbringing shapes civic responsibility and respect for national and universal values among youth, fostering moral and intellectual development. This process ensures individuals take their rightful place in society and helps nurture a well-rounded generation.

Moreover, effective activity of civil society institutions requires strong organizational-institutional foundations.

In Uzbekistan, these foundations consist of legislation, normative legal documents, and organizational structures that regulate the establishment, activities, rights, and responsibilities of civil society institutions.

The activities of civil society institutions are governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Civil Code, the Law "On Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations," the Law "On Mass Media," and other legal acts.

Additionally, decrees and resolutions of the President of Uzbekistan, the Cabinet of Ministers, and other normative legal documents support and promote the development of civil society institutions.

Civil society institutions are organized in various forms such as associations, funds, centers, institutes, clubs, and others.

Financial independence is crucial for the independent activity of civil society institutions in Uzbekistan. Their funding sources include membership fees, grants from foreign and local donor organizations, charitable donations from individuals and legal entities, and importantly, state subsidies allocated for socially significant projects.

Civil society institutions must keep the public informed about their activities and maintain constant communication. Tools such as websites, social networks, and cooperation with mass media are important in this regard. Transparency and openness increase public trust.

In the context of globalization and the development of information technologies, civil society institutions adopt new forms and mechanisms, including digital platforms for supporting citizen initiatives,

interactive methods of gauging public opinion, strengthening cooperation with international NGOs, increasing youth engagement, and expanding their participation in governance.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has created broad opportunities for civil society institutions and improved their legislative and material foundations. The system of state grants, open dialogue platforms, and digital services contribute to transparent and effective activities.

In conclusion, civil society institutions are a vital social mechanism in implementing democratic reforms and ensuring human rights and freedoms. By improving their types, functions, and organizational-institutional foundations, it is possible to strengthen trust and cooperation between the state and society. Today, civil society institutions are important not only as watchdogs but also as strategic partners of the state.

Ongoing reforms aimed at enhancing the roles of mahallas, NGOs, mass media, and other institutions in Uzbekistan play a crucial role in strengthening openness, transparency, and the rule of law. The stronger the civil society, the more stable the development of society and the greater the citizens' well-being. Therefore, supporting their activities comprehensively and creating a favorable environment remains a priority of state policy.

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