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Decentralization – Important Factor of Improving Modern Public Administration

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Annotation: This article examines decentralization as a crucial factor in modernizing public administration in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the implementation of decentralization reforms within the framework of the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 and the Concept of Administrative Reforms. The research explores theoretical foundations of decentralization through various scholarly perspectives and identifies its key aspects: increasing efficiency of local authorities, enhancing responsibility through expanded powers, enabling direct citizen participation in decision-making, and consolidating central authority functions. The article argues that decentralization represents a paradigm shift from hierarchical, centralized governance to a more democratic model that balances central and local authority. The study concludes that decentralization is integral to administrative modernization, serving as a necessary condition for introducing modern governance institutions and mechanisms while strengthening civil society development in Uzbekistan.

Key words: decentralization, public administration, administrative reforms, local governance, Uzbekistan strategy, democratic governance, centralization balance, citizen participation, territorial development, administrative modernization, civil society, governmental efficiency.

Introduction

Today, Uzbekistan undergoes radical renewal and accelerated development in various spheres of public life. The political, legal and organizational basis for these reform changes is the Development **Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026**. The purpose of this document is to standardize the administrative apparatus and optimization of work processes in the public administration system, which especially strengthens the **decentralization of public administration** and ensuring the openness of state bodies as a direction of reforms in this area[1]. **To this important importance, the first focus of the document is essentially aimed at improving public administration, while the** task of reforming public administration system is put forward.

It is worth noting that the measures set out in the Action Strategy for improving public administration are clearly and expanded in the Concept of Administrative Reforms, approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 8, 2017 No. UP-5185 "On approval of the Concept of Administrative Reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan". found expression**. The Concept justifies the need for further democratization of public administration in order to improve its efficiency and defines the main directions of this process. Consequently, this influential document states that as one of the weaknesses of public administration,** "excessive centralization of state functions and powers leads to a decrease in the role of local

[1] PF-60-sonli Farmoni 28.01.2022-yildagi “2022-2026-yillarga mo‘ljallangan Yangi O‘zbekiston taraqqiyot strategiyasi to‘g‘risida” https://lex.uz/docs/-5841063

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executive authorities in formulating territorial development programs and solving the most important problems of the population." [2] **A series of important measures for the democratization of public administration, strengthened in the Concept**, gradual decentralization of public administration, improvement **of the vertical management system and mechanisms of cooperation between executive authorities**, expansion of financial capabilities, roles and responsibilities of local authorities, organization of the system of local government Ensuring the practical implementation of the principle of separation of powers, increasing the role of citizens' self-government bodies in solving pressing issues of socio-economic development and improving the efficiency of public administration are important directions in ensuring the effectiveness of public administration.

The **Uzbekistan-2030 Strategy also provides for the transfer of at** least 30% of the tasks and functions of the executive authorities of the republic to local executive bodies within the framework of the policy of decentralization of public administration, as well as the formation of a legal framework for the formation of local executive authorities on the basis of democratic principles[3].

The formation of a democratic model of administration and the formation of civil society is possible only if there is an optimal balance between centralization and decentralization in the sphere of public administration. The mechanism of interaction between decentralization and centralization is a prerequisite for effective and constructive management.

The relationship between the different levels of government should be based on a national strategy with clear goals and objectives. Achieving a reasonable balance between decentralization and centralization is one of the ways to achieve the effective functioning of the state, particularly at the national level, as a reassessment and modification of the role, responsibilities and authority of government at various levels.

Decentralization of public administration is one of the major problems facing the solution in democratic countries, especially in Uzbekistan. The Concept of Administrative Reforms was adopted in order to ensure the full implementation of the reforms being carried out in the country, the adopted regulatory legal acts and state programs, as well as the formation of a new system of public administration that will timely identify and effectively solve the problems of socio-political and socio-economic development. The main objective of the concept is to form a conceptual new model of public administration.

The primary goal of these reforms was to further democratize and modernize public administration, adapting it to modern requirements. At the same time, one of the key elements of a democratic state is the consideration of the interests of citizens in the decisions made by the state and the participation of citizens in this process, that is, in the creation of a strong civil society, and the level of development of the country is determined by the extent to which citizens themselves participate in solving problems of public life. The formation and effective functioning of effective civil society institutions presuppose the existence of a democratic system of public administration, and in countries that are close to the ideal model of the rule of law, these systems have largely been formed. One of the most important factors to involve society and citizens in the decision-making process is the decentralization of public administration, that is, the transfer of certain central functions of public administration to subordinate structures, local authorities, to self-government bodies, as well as to non-governmental non-profit organizations. The interests of citizens should be taken into account and the participation of citizens in this process, i.e. in building a strong civil society, as well as the level of progress of the country will be

[2] O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2017 yil 8 sentyabrda qabul qilingan “O‘zbekiston Respublikasida Ma’muriy islohotlar konsepsiyasini tasdiqlash to‘g‘risida”gi Farmoni bilan tasdiqlangan O‘zbekiston Respublikasida Ma’muriy islohotlar konsepsiyasi // https://lex.uz/docs/-3331174

[3] Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-158 of 11.09.2023 National Legislative Information Database, Issue 06/25/56/0274

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determined by the extent to which citizens themselves participate in solving the problems of public life. One of the most important factors to involve society and citizens in the decision-making process is the decentralization of public administration, that is, the transfer of certain central functions of public administration to subordinate structures, local authorities.

This, in turn, requires a clear understanding of the essence of decentralization, reasoning, and balanced action, as it relates to different aspects of society: political, legal, social, administrative, and economic.

Until the 20th century, the construction of centralized government was dominant. A prime example of this is Napoleon's construction of public administration, which became a model for other European countries because in it the exercise of the will of the head of state or parliament was effective. Equality in France's rigidly hierarchical form of government, flattening regional and local differences, as well as centralized public administration, ensured the implementation of national projects of strategic importance during this period.

From the 80s of the twentieth century onwards, in many developed and developing countries, in order to expand the direct participation of citizens in the process of exercising mass power, as well as centralized structures based on a hierarchical system and directed from top to bottom as their effective model of governance until the middle of the 20th century, began to face a crisis in the regulation of constantly changing social relations[4], resulting in a paradigm shift in developing countries towards the transfer of powers of central authorities to local jurisdictions, i.e., to systems based on decentralized governance.

In order to understand the role of the concept of decentralization in the modernization of public administration and its effective application in practice, it is necessary to correctly understand the essence of this concept and the concept in general, to analyze how decentralization of public power and administration can be carried out in practice, what are its features: advantages, disadvantages and limits.

In this context, the concept of "decentralization" is a broad concept in structure and content, which is related to the structurally and functionally rational organization of the system of public administration and the system of state power as a whole, as well as the mechanisms for the formation of trust (legitimacy) in public power[5].

If we pay attention to the etymology of the word "decentralization" in specialized academic dictionaries, we note that it is "decentralized, deleted, **centralis** – middle, that is, it is expressed as "as a process of transfer of functions and powers from central structures to subordinate ones, while in English dictionaries it is defined as **"decentralization"** - We can see that it is defined as "a system of governance based on the transfer of certain functions of the central government to local public authorities and self-government bodies".[6]

Therefore, the content of the concept of "decentralization" allows us to define all its features in the process of understanding it as the basic basis of the organization of public administration, the method or form of public administration, the democratic-legal regime of state bodies, the form of organization of state power. His analysis of the essence of content in this way contributes to a clear and accurate understanding and application of the construct of "decentralization" in public administration.

Indeed, in the modern era of globalization, conceptual understanding of the problems of decentralization of public administration and analysis of its legal foundations in modern scientific

[4] Fumihiko Saito. Foundations for Local Governance Decentralization in Comparative Perspective. 2008 Physica-Verlag Heidelberg. 2008. – P. 13-14.
[5] Daniel Treisman. The Architecture of Government. Rethinking Political Decentralization. Cambridge university press. 2007. – P. 21-22.
[6] https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199563050.001.0001/acref-9780199563050-e-1063

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literature are reaching a new level. Before analyzing the essence and essence of the decentralization process in the context of the modernization of public administration in our country, it is worthwhile to pay attention to the scientific analysis of this category. Because, today, in scientific sources and specialized encyclopedias there are different interpretations of the concept of decentralization, in which it is difficult to give a continuous definition of this process, which is recognized by the majority.

It is worth noting that decentralization is not sufficiently analyzed in our national scientific literature, in particular in the legal literature. Some authors have analyzed one aspect or another of this complex process. In particular, S. Safayev, analyzing the concept of decentralization, notes that at the stage of human development, ensuring the direct participation of the general public in society and public administration was the driving force that served to make a sharp turn in the development of society. He argues that the concept of decentralization is understood as the transfer (delegation) of some functions in public administration to lower subordinate structures, i.e. local authorities[7].

Also, G. Ismoilova, who conducted research on this issue, stressed the need to ensure a balance between the processes of centralization and decentralization in the system of public administration and pay attention to its national-territorial structure [8].

It should be noted that in the coverage of the theoretical aspects of decentralization, it is necessary to emphasize the existence of a wide range of scientific researches, substantiated analytical works of foreign scientists.

In particular, J. Cohen and S. Peterson in their research note that decentralization is an important method, tool on the path of both idea and development, and they also created a "classification system" consisting of six main forms of decentralization. According to their interpretation, there are six forms of decentralization – (1) historical origin, (2) territorial and task-oriented, (3) problem-oriented, (4) service-oriented, (5) single-state experience, and (6) goal-oriented[9].

According to the Italian scientist T. Falleti, decentralization is the sum of all processes aimed primarily at reforming the state power, state system and transferring the powers, resources and tasks of the central government to local authorities[10]. Decentralization is a phenomenon of a management and organizational nature, which ensures that decision-making is organization-wide, not at the level of a single individual. Because in this place, first of all, collegiality is implied in decision-making.

D. Rondinelli, one of the scholars who has studied the concept of decentralization in public administration, says that decentralization, in addition to providing for the distribution of powers in planning and decision-making, or the transfer from top to bottom, also takes into account the transfer of a certain part of the functions of central government bodies to their respective local organizations and to local authorities or non-governmental organizations[11].

From the analysis of the presented opinions, we can see that the main strategic goal of the reforms in public administration is decisive and unchangeable, the creation of a free democratic state based on the market economy, the formation of a solid foundation of civil society does not separate and independent from the processes of decentralization of public administration and is inextricably linked with them.

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[7] С.Сафаев. К вопросу о децентрализации совершенствовании государственного управлениия Жамият ва бошқарув, 2013 й. 1-сон. - Б. 25

[8] Г.Исмоилова. Ўзбекистонда маҳаллий давлат ҳокимияти ва ўзини-ўзи бошқариш органларини либераллаштиришнинг давлат ҳуқуқий йўналишлари.Тошкент 2013 йил, - Б. 269.

[9] Cohen, J., Peterson, S., Administrative Decentralization: Strategies for Developing Countries, Kumarian Press (published for and on behalf of the United Nations), Draft Proof for Publication, June, 1999; pp. - P. 16 - 20.

[10] Falleti T.G. Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 285 p. - P. 34.

[11] Rondinelli, D., «Government Decentralization in Comparative Perspective: Theory and Practice in Developing Countries» International Review of Administrative Sciences, 47, (2), 1981. – P. 8-10.

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From the above analyses, we can see that the decentralization of state (mass) governance is a complex and complex process. In general, it can be said that the decentralization of public administration in legal democratic states consists in the transfer of a certain amount of power of the entities with the competence of mass management to subordinate structures with the necessary rights, responsibilities and resources. The main purpose of such a redistribution of management functions is to create an opportunity to make the most optimal management decisions based on the general interests of the population, balancing the interests of the state, territorial (regional) and local levels[12].

Moreover, different scientific concepts and legal procedures do not have a unified view on this phenomenon, although all of them connect decentralization primarily with the relationship of optimal distribution of management competencies between the state (state) administration system and the relevant competent entities.

Conclusion

Analyzing the above-mentioned views on the concept of decentralization, it can be concluded that decentralization in the field of public administration is aimed at the transfer of political and administrative decision-making powers from the level of central state authorities (mass authorities) to the level of local state authorities and self-government structures relevant.

It is also possible to list the main aspects of the processes of decentralization of public administration system.

The first is an increase in the efficiency of local authorities in the regions and the provision of services in the social sphere.

Second, the increase in the sense of responsibility of local authorities as a result of the expansion of their functions and powers and the formation of an effective system of dialogue between citizens and local authorities based on a high level of trust (their legitimacy is ensured).

Thirdly, as a result of the gradual transfer of some of the powers to local authorities and self-government structures, conditions will be created for the direct participation of citizens in decision-making on issues of public interest.

Fourth, to consolidate the efforts of the central authorities aimed at the effective implementation of their powers and functions in providing "mass services" at the national level (internal and external security, legal order, macroeconomic policy)

It can be noted that the processes of decentralization are an integral part of the reforms aimed at modernizing the public administration system in any country and are one of the necessary conditions for the introduction of modern institutions and mechanisms of public administration and improving their effectiveness.

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