



**STATE POLICY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL HANDICRAFTS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
<p>This article analyzes the legal foundations for the development of national handicrafts in the Republic of Uzbekistan, including laws, presidential decrees, and government resolutions adopted during the years of independence. It also highlights the establishment of the “Hunarmand” Association and the reforms implemented to support artisans.</p>	<p>Handicrafts, entrepreneurship, legal framework, “Hunarmand” Association, state policy, decree, resolution, national heritage.</p>

Introduction

By the end of the 1980s, the entire Soviet region was facing a deep social and economic crisis. Providing the population with food, clothing, household goods, and housing became increasingly difficult. In particular, unemployment in Uzbekistan was severe. This was mainly because the long-standing cotton monopoly in the republic’s economy had prevented the development of other sectors of the national economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

As of January 1, 1986, the population of Uzbekistan was 18,487 thousand people. Of these, 10,742 thousand people, or 59.1%, lived in rural areas, while 7,745 thousand people, or 41.9%, lived in urban areas. The population of Surkhandarya region was 1,133 thousand, of which 910 thousand, or 80.4%, lived in rural areas and 223 thousand, or 19.6%, in urban areas. Of the 1,444 thousand population of Kashkadarya, 1,079 thousand, or 74.7%, lived in rural areas and 365 thousand, or 25.3%, in urban areas [1.6–7]. Considering that the majority of the population in the southern regions of the republic lived in rural areas, it is evident that most social problems were concentrated in rural areas.

The failure to resolve accumulated social problems over the years in Uzbekistan further complicated the situation. According to 1989 data, labor productivity in industry was 40% lower than the national average, and in agriculture it was two times lower. The number of unemployed people in the republic reached 1 million [2.4]. Therefore, a number of measures had to be taken to address unemployment.

Eliminating unemployment and ensuring employment for the population became a pressing issue in Uzbekistan. For this purpose, it was necessary to develop small and medium-sized businesses. During

the Soviet period, handicraft cooperatives also existed. Such cooperatives were called “artels,” and they held a firm place in Soviet society.

According to 1953 data, there were 114,000 small workshops and handicraft associations in the Soviet Union, employing 2 million people. Of these, 12,667 were artels, which included 2 research institutes, 22 experimental laboratories, and 100 design organizations. They employed 1,844,000 people and produced 33,444 types of goods worth 31.2 billion rubles [3]. Artels supplied the domestic market with furniture, clothing, household goods, metal and tin products, children’s toys, jewelry, and other items. Even during wartime, artels provided equipment such as crates and supplies for soldiers and horses. Small workshops produced 6% of the country’s gross output [4].

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

During the leadership of N.S. Khrushchev (1953–1964), artels were abolished and placed under state control, which dealt a serious blow to small-scale entrepreneurship. From this period, commodity shortages (“deficit”) began to appear in the USSR. During the early years of M.S. Gorbachev’s leadership, cooperatives were allowed again. However, by that time, experience in small entrepreneurship had been lost, and newly formed cooperatives consisted not of genuine private producers but of speculators, traders, and moneylenders. Instead of contributing to development, they aimed only to exploit the state and the population for personal gain.

Therefore, the government of Uzbekistan began to define the legal status of entrepreneurs. Legal documents related to private entrepreneurship, including handicrafts, in Uzbekistan can be conditionally divided into three groups:

1. Laws adopted by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Supreme Soviet in 1990–1994);
2. Decrees and resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
3. Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In analyzing the development of private entrepreneurship, laws adopted in the 1990s are of particular importance. For example, the Law “On Property,” adopted on October 31, 1990, established the inviolability of property and the right of every person to own property. It also recognized property rights and ensured their legal protection [5].

The Law “On Entrepreneurship,” adopted on February 15, 1991, guaranteed the economic and legal independence of entrepreneurs and defined their rights and responsibilities. According to this law, entrepreneurship was divided into individual, labor-based (employing hired labor), and collective forms [6].

The Law “On Cooperation,” adopted on June 14, 1991, consisted of 16 articles and defined the specific features of cooperative activity. The first article stated that cooperatives were voluntary associations of individuals and legal entities based on a joint property structure. Citizens aged 16 and above were allowed to join cooperatives. Article 16 specified that the law applied to gardening, individual construction, and other consumer cooperatives [7].

The Law “On Leasing,” adopted on November 19, 1991, consisted of two articles. The first article defined leasing as the paid, temporary possession and use of land, other natural resources, and property necessary for economic activity. It also identified the parties to lease relations as the lessor and the lessee.

The change in the population's attitude toward private property and the formation of a sense of ownership played an important role in the decrees and resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In particular, the Presidential Decree PF-745 dated January 21, 1994, "On Measures for Further Deepening Economic Reforms, Protecting Private Property Interests and Developing Entrepreneurship," marked a radical turning point in the development of private ownership. This decree outlined measures for privatization of state property, transformation into private ownership, and the establishment of real estate and republican stock exchanges. In addition, according to this decree, customs duties on all goods imported into Uzbekistan by businessmen were abolished until July 1, 1995.

In coordinating the activities of artisans in Uzbekistan, the Presidential Decree PF-1741 dated March 31, 1997, "On Measures for State Support for the Further Development of Folk Arts and Applied Arts," was of great importance. In particular, it emphasized the need to provide raw materials and equipment to artisans producing high-quality artistic goods at home, to establish a network of specialized shops for selling finished products, and to create conditions for youth training in handicrafts. In addition, 150 million soums were allocated for the activities of the Republican "Hunarmand" Association [8].

Based on this decree, according to Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 282 dated June 4, 1997, "On the Establishment of the 'Hunarmand' Association of Folk Artisans and Issues of Its Activity," the "Hunarmand" Association was established under the "Musavvir" Scientific-Production Center. The head of the association, by position, is the deputy director of the "Musavvir" center. The executive staff of regional branches of the association consisted of a total of 70 employees, including heads of departments, specialists in material and technical supply, senior art historians, marketing specialists, and accountants. Regional branches were allocated as follows: 5 staff members in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Andijan, Kashkadarya, Tashkent region, and Tashkent city; 8 staff members in Samarkand and Fergana regions; 7 staff members in Bukhara and Khorezm regions; and 4 staff members in other regions [9].

The Presidential Decree PF-1987 dated April 9, 1998, "On Further Stimulating the Development of Private Entrepreneurship, Small and Medium-Sized Business," became another important legal document protecting private business interests. It set out measures to support entrepreneurs, especially artisans.

The Presidential Decree PF-3619 dated June 14, 2005, "On Further Improvement of the System of Legal Protection of Business Entities," strengthened the legal protection of entrepreneurs, including artisans. For example, starting from July 1, 2005, the application of legal enforcement measures against entrepreneurs was allowed only through the court. It also established criminal liability for supervisory bodies conducting unlawful inspections beyond their authority [10].

According to the annex of the Presidential Decree PF-3588 dated March 28, 2005, "On Measures for the Further Development of Folk Arts and Applied Arts," 25 types of folk handicrafts were identified. In subsequent years, the support of master artisans was elevated to the level of state policy. In particular, according to the Presidential Decree PF-3983 dated April 1, 2008, "On Additional Measures to Stimulate the Development of Folk Arts and Applied Arts," individual artisans producing handicraft goods at home were exempted from taxes until April 1, 2010.

CONCLUSION

The legal framework created for the development of national handicrafts in Uzbekistan ensured the stable development of the sector. As a result of state support measures, handicrafts became an important sector of both the economy and culture.

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