



# Socio-Cultural Factors Of Human Capital Development In Reducing Poverty

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**Abstract:** This study examines the impact of socio-cultural factors on human capital development as a means to reduce poverty. Using a qualitative sociological approach, the research analyzes educational access, healthcare, and employment opportunities in Uzbekistan. Data were collected from policy documents, statistical reports, and interviews with social development experts. The results suggest that investments in education and social protection significantly enhance human capital, contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth.

**Keywords:** Human Capital, Poverty Reduction, Social Policy, Education, Economic Development.

## Introduction

The main goal of social development is for every person to realize their potential, live a healthy, creative, quality education and an active life. The development of human capital is at the heart of the New Uzbekistan Strategy and is an integral part of our efforts to achieve our goals of eradicating poverty and accelerating general well-being by 2030, to promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth and strengthen the sustainability of our position among developing countries.

Strengthening social protection of citizens and reducing poverty have been identified as priorities of state policy, and providing the population with new jobs and a guaranteed source of income, qualified medical and educational services, and decent living conditions has been raised to a qualitatively new level. In implementing the idea of “changing society by changing people,” the need for state social policy to “strategically develop human capital” is emphasized. Human capital is the knowledge, skills, and health that people invest in and accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as contributing members of society. Investing in people through healthcare, quality education, job creation, and skill development helps develop human capital, which is the key to

eradicating poverty and building a more socially inclusive society. We believe that by supporting education, economic activities, social protection and stability, the state and society together can reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. This approach not only promotes economic growth, but also promotes social justice and stability.

## Methodology

In recent years, the study of human capital in our country has become one of the important topics of not only economics but also social sciences, in particular, sociological research. It is worth noting the monographs and other research works of M. Bekmurodov, A. Umarov, A. Kholbekov on the sociological aspects of human capital, M. Sodirjonov on the ethnosociological characteristics of human capital development processes, and H. Akramov on the importance of social capital in improving the quality of life of the population. Also, philosophers and political scientists M. Abdullayeva - the problem of human capital in education, K. Nazarov - the importance of national values in the development of human capital, F. Yuldasheva - spiritual values in the process of globalization, G. Ghaffarova - the importance of digitization and national values in the development of human capital, M. Sharipov - the essence and characteristics of intellectual human capital, the category of health capital, its types, sources, A. Abdullayev - socio-philosophical aspects of the manifestation of human capital, F. Kasimov - Socio-philosophical foundations of human capital development in a modern Uzbekistan, M. Mukhammedov - Philosophical analysis of issues of modern mechanisms of human capital development and their significance in development, M. Norqobilov - Social capital - a source of ensuring national unity, D. Ernazarov - conducted research on the history of social capital development in Uzbekistan, the experience of foreign countries in the development of social capital, and the development of social capital in the mahalla.

A study conducted by Pakistani scholars M. Majid and M. Malik [10] found that literacy is a major factor in poverty. They found that factors such as the experience, age, gender, and employment of the head of the household affect the likelihood of people falling into poverty. They also suggested that female headship has a greater impact on poverty. The reason is that women have less access to education and income.

Ch. Peng et al. analyzed the factors that cause poverty in their studies. They list the following as factors that increase the likelihood of poverty: old age, being a woman, not having a spouse, being a single parent, being unemployed, living in rented housing, having low literacy and poor health. Also, having a disabled or chronically ill family member. It should be emphasized that higher education helps to avoid poverty and marginal poverty.

The ideologist of neoliberalism, Alfred von Hayek, considers poverty to be "a natural phenomenon in human development and necessary for the good of society".

## Result and Discussion

As our President emphasized, poverty cannot be solved only by distributing money and paying benefits. For this, it is important to educate, train and provide jobs to members of poor families. Today, there are 250 thousand vacancies in enterprises. However, 35 percent of working-age members of poor families lack knowledge and skills. Some are also

unable to work properly due to chronic diseases. 83 percent of poor families have their own plots of land, but problems with water, electricity and roads create difficulties.

The first section of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-158 dated September 11, 2023 on the Strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030" is entitled "Creating decent conditions for every person to realize their potential," and includes reforms in the education system, ensuring public health, providing social services and reducing poverty, state youth policy and sports, ensuring spiritual development, and bringing the cultural sphere to a new level.

From our point of view, human capital is a system of needs, abilities and desires created by individuals and communities on the basis of human potential to carry out socially significant activities, social relations and functions.

What attracted our attention even more was the fact that the head of our state emphasized that poverty cannot be solved only by distributing money and paying benefits. For this, it is important to educate, train and provide employment to poor family members. Human capital, in turn, is a phenomenon that forms these two main components: "Human + education = material and spiritual well-being".

Individual components of human capital, a person or a set of persons, are formed in the process of acquiring specific knowledge, developing skills and learning through the use of systems of needs, abilities and training, which allows them to form and develop their socio-economic status in society.

The activities of people, in which they produce their capital, depend on their social qualities, and the development of these qualities enriches the person himself, his human abilities. Human capital, like economic capital, comes from the labor process, and it is in this process that the necessary qualities should develop.

Regarding the main secret of the Singapore miracle, Lee Kuan Yew emphasizes that "If there is a single formula for success, it is constant study, learning. It is to make things work and understand why they do not work". This means that education, training and research are factors that demonstrate the effectiveness of human capital. Education is identified as a special element of human capital, and its main parts are made up of a combination of four components: cultural and ethnic characteristics, general education, vocational training, and basic skills.

Investments in education are not only a strategic tool for national development but also a social policy aimed at improving human capital and ensuring socio-economic progress. As a result, enhancing human capital leads to material well-being and a healthy lifestyle. Human capital is an individual form of capital unique to each person. A person's abilities, knowledge, skills, and experience constitute their personal asset.

Education is necessary, but it must be designed to foster critical thinking and enhance human capital development. Over time, negative stereotypes in education have emerged. Many people pursue higher education solely to gain social status, regardless of the chosen field. In many cases, young individuals define their life paths based on whether they become students after finishing school. Moreover, the education process often focuses on mechanical skill acquisition, such as listening to lectures, memorizing details, applying

formulas, and so on. However, there has been little emphasis on questioning ideas, expressing opinions openly, and, most importantly, independent thinking.

The quality of human capital directly impacts the socio-economic development of regions within a country. According to experts, education is not just about an individual's future success—it is an investment in the collective future of society and the nation. When human capital exceeds a certain threshold, it strengthens collective innovation. In our view, when the percentage of highly educated individuals increases, it guarantees the transformation of “tradition-based collectivity” into an “innovative collectivity”, ultimately creating a nation of creators.

For many years, poverty was a taboo subject in our society, and instead of using this term, a softer phrase—“low-income status”—was often preferred. However, the increasing focus on poverty reduction requires addressing income inequality, ensuring the short- and long-term effectiveness of social policies, and improving budget expenditure efficiency to achieve better results.

The explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language states that the word “poor” means “a state of being poor, lacking, lacking in the necessities of life, living in want or need”. In general, recognizing that the Uzbek language is a rich language, the word “poverty” can be expressed in several words. For example, it is also expressed in words such as “poor”, “poor”, “garib”, “nochor”, “neftoj”, “bechora”, “underprivileged”, “in need of social protection”. According to the UN definition, poverty is a lack of income and resources necessary for a person to live, in addition, hunger and malnutrition, restrictions in access to health care, education or other basic services, lack of housing, living in a dangerous natural and man-made environment, and conditions of social inequality.

At this point, we considered it appropriate to quote the opinion of the Greek philosopher Aristotle: “To commit suicide, unable to bear poverty or other similar sufferings, is not a sign of courage, but rather a sign of cowardice. For this is weakness, an escape from difficulties. A weak person accepts death not for its own good, but to escape from suffering.” In Islam, five important principles are presented as the main approach to freeing a person from the whirlpool of need, saving him from the constant grip of poverty and destitution, and ensuring his peaceful, active and happy life. In particular, in the Holy Quran, the most important and primary approach to getting rid of need is work. Also, kinship rights, zakat, obligations other than zakat, voluntary donations and personal donations are identified as ways to save a person from poverty. Also, researcher N. Kholmurodov stated in his research work: the zakat system is the most powerful way to solve the problem of poverty. When we say zakat, we should not understand only insignificant shares. Because giving one tenth or one twentieth of the crop of the land is also zakat in essence. “O believers, spend from the good things you have earned and from what We have brought out for you from the earth!” - we have once again witnessed that it is an important act of worship in Muslim society.

Although poverty is a characteristic feature of each society, its level and scope may vary. Determining the level of poverty is also carried out within the framework of specific approaches in different countries. Because the economic development of a country, its

resources, historical values, lifestyle, national views, culture and traditions differ. This difference also leads to differences in poverty. Therefore, poverty in each country takes on a unique character, depending on the level of income achieved and the structure of the economy.

“Poverty is the lack of choices and opportunities throughout a person’s life, the existence of barriers to full participation in society, and the lack of opportunities to feed and clothe one’s family, to receive education or medical care, to engage in any form of employment or gainful employment, and to obtain credit. Poverty is also a socially constrained, vulnerable and vulnerable state of individuals, households and communities in the face of risks and hazards.”. As a result of sociological research and observations, the following factors can be identified that affect the poverty of the population: unhealthy family environment (disability, ignorance, lack of sufficient skills), diseases (various viruses, premature death, genetic and later acquired diseases), natural conditions (as a result of drought, floods, fires and other natural disasters), economic aspects (lack of economic culture, slow economic growth in the regions, financial instability, lack of infrastructure and communication technologies, devaluation of the country and the fact that the creation of new jobs exists only on paper), inability to work (laziness, lack of interest in work, living at the expense of others), social vices in individuals (drug addiction, alcohol addiction, prostitution), unemployment (uncompetitiveness in the labor market inability to give, partial, seasonal, lack of a certain skill), a mood of dependence (indifference, lack of confidence in the future and the future, lack of understanding of the essence of man and life), excessive luxury (the desire to acquire more than necessary for a wedding, a house, a car, etc., as a matter of tradition), corruption (negative phenomena in mentality, inconsistency and paternalism), and an aggressive and pessimistic attitude towards the reforms of the state's economic and social policy.

The new development strategy of Uzbekistan also sets out priority tasks such as “creating new jobs in the country, increasing population incomes and thereby reducing poverty by at least 2 times by the end of 2026”, for which “developing and implementing state poverty reduction programs, establishing a mechanism for conducting social work at the local level (based on the “mahallabay” principle) in the provision of state social assistance and services”. At the same time, the head of state, Sh. Mirziyoyev, for the first time, emphasizes that there is a poor population in our country, which “makes up approximately 12-15 percent of the population, that is, 4-5 million people”. On this basis, it set the task of “developing a poverty reduction program together with international organizations and conducting in-depth studies in this regard based on international standards, creating a new methodology that includes the concept of poverty, criteria for its definition and assessment methods”. These tasks further increase the need for research based on new approaches to poverty reduction. Therefore, the tasks of analyzing the issue of poverty reduction and conducting research based on cause-and-effect relationships in the field of social philosophy are becoming increasingly relevant.

The use of the following sociological research methods is important in studying poverty. Quantitative research - studying the levels of poverty through statistics and



questionnaires, identifying differences between different social groups. Qualitative research - studying the experiences of people living in poverty through interviews and focus groups. This helps to understand the personal and emotional aspects of poverty. Sociological research on poverty helps to understand its causes, consequences and social impacts. These studies are important in developing strategies to reduce poverty and ensure social justice. The study of poverty serves to improve social policy and economic development processes.

From the studies conducted, it can be concluded that with the decrease in equality of opportunities, the problems of obtaining education, finding a job in a specialty, and fear of losing an existing job are becoming especially acute among young people. Due to the lack of a balance between the demand in the labor market and the specialties in which highly educated specialists are currently being trained by our country's higher education institutions, the issue of ensuring youth employment is becoming increasingly acute.

## Conclusion

Education is the main tool for reducing poverty. It expands people's opportunities in their personal and social lives and contributes to economic development. Therefore, paying attention to education is an important task for the entire society.

As noted above, the perfection of any human capital is directly related to the quality of education as its most important component. With special emphasis on modern higher education, there is a high demand everywhere for personnel not only with diplomas, but also for competitive, qualified and strong-willed personnel with qualities that correspond to the spirit of the new era (composure, restraint, diplomacy, culture of dialogue, positive character, organization, initiative, etc.). Comparative analysis of developed countries and corporations shows that the category of pragmatic characteristics of university education increases not only the quantity but also the quality of employment. In our opinion, poverty is an important economic, social and cultural problem, which is widely studied in sociological research. The study of poverty helps to understand its causes, consequences and social impacts. Absolute and relative poverty (absolute poverty is the inability to meet a person's basic needs. Relative poverty refers to a person's poor economic situation compared to other people in society).

Poverty can have a number of negative consequences for individuals, families and communities. Workers living in poverty are more likely to experience poor health outcomes, including chronic diseases, mental health problems and premature death. This is partly due to the stress and uncertainty associated with poor lifestyles, as well as limited access to health care and other resources that promote health. In addition, they often face difficulties in moving up the economic ladder and improving their living standards. Children of workers living below the poverty line have limited educational opportunities and lower educational outcomes. Working families with high levels of poverty are often characterized by family instability and social unrest. This can lead to a cycle of poverty and social dysfunction that takes a long time to overcome. It is important for the state to pursue a consistently proactive policy in its foreign policy to strengthen international cooperation and increase financing for regional development in order to successfully transition to a more sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economy. Countries should focus primarily on

reducing poverty through economic growth, which can be achieved by increasing investment in job creation, human capital development, access to services, and infrastructure improvements. Poverty undermines the health, labor force, and scientific potential of a nation, which in turn leads to a decrease in state budgets and an aggravation of political processes.

The development of human capital in reducing poverty requires taking into account socio-cultural factors. Education, health, social ties, and cultural values play an important role in reducing poverty and increasing the well-being of the population. By combining these factors, a society can achieve sustainable development.

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