HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

MODERN PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS OF THE STATE CIVIL SERVICE

Gaibnazarov Boxodir Rixsialiyevich
Independent Researcher,
DSBA under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Abstract. This article analyzes the contemporary problems of the state civil service system and proposes solutions to address them. The civil service is the core mechanism of public administration, and its efficiency directly affects societal well-being and state stability. In recent years, Uzbekistan has undertaken large-scale reforms in this sphere. However, several systemic issues persist: bureaucratic barriers, low qualifications of personnel, corruption risks, insufficient salaries, unclear career advancement paths, and the slow pace of digital transformation. Each problem is examined in terms of its origins, manifestations, and consequences. Drawing on international experience (Estonia, Singapore, South Korea) and local conditions, the study offers actionable solutions: modernising the training system, introducing open competitive selection for civil service positions, implementing digital technologies, raising salaries and social benefits, and changing the service culture. The paper is intended for public officials, policy makers, and researchers.
Keywords: state civil service, bureaucracy, corruption, personnel qualifications, digital transformation, reforms, administrative efficiency.

Introduction.

The state civil service is the foundation of any modern state. Laws are adopted, budgets are formed, social programmes are implemented – all of these rely on civil servants. If the system is healthy and efficient, society progresses. If the system is diseased, even the best laws will fail. That is why reforming the civil service is one of the most pressing issues on the agenda of every country. [1]

In the early years of independence, Uzbekistan inherited a rigid, hierarchical, centralised governance model from the Soviet system. Since 2017, however, large-scale reforms have been launched to fundamentally change this system. Many functions of state bodies have been reviewed, digital government systems introduced, and a number of public services moved online. Yet systemic problems remain. Citizens still face inconveniences when applying to state agencies, some decisions take an unreasonably long time, and qualified personnel often leave the system. [2]

This article analyses five major groups of problems: excessive bureaucratic procedures and regulations; shortcomings in personnel qualification and recruitment; corruption risks and lack of transparency; low material incentives; and uneven digital transformation. Each problem is examined separately, including its causes and consequences. Afterwards, solutions are proposed based on international best practices and the Uzbek context. [3]

Several important directions for solving these problems exist: first, establishing an open, competitive system for entry and career growth; second, continuously improving the qualifications of civil servants and introducing modern assessment methods; third, raising salaries and social packages to competitive levels; fourth, simplifying bureaucratic processes with digital technologies; fifth, reorienting the service culture toward citizen-centred principles. Only a comprehensive implementation of these measures can improve the efficiency of the civil service. [4]

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Main Part.

First problem: Bureaucratic barriers and excessive regulations. One of the most criticised features of the civil service is the excessive number of documents, permits, approval stages, and waiting times required to solve simple matters. A single decision may need several departments, several signatures, and several weeks. This not only frustrates citizens but also wastes state resources. The main causes of bureaucracy are an exaggerated need for safety and control, as well as a habit of shifting responsibility. Every official wants as many approvals as possible before signing, which drags out the process. [5]

To solve this problem, several mechanisms are proposed. First, expand the "one- stop shop" principle: citizens should submit all necessary documents and receive an answer in one office or via an online platform without running from place to place. Second, review internal administrative procedures and eliminate unnecessary steps. Third, delegate decision- making authority to lower levels – decentralise power from the centre to line ministries and from ministries to regional offices. Fourth, automate and digitise processes to reduce human intervention. [6]

Second problem: low personnel qualifications and flaws in recruitment. Often people enter the civil service not through open competition but through personal connections or formalities. As a result, employees without the necessary knowledge and skills are hired. They cannot perform their duties effectively, which lowers service quality. Moreover, the training system remains outdated: a few days of lectures, little practical training, and no proper assessment of knowledge. Employees have no opportunity to learn new technologies or modern management techniques. [7]

The solution begins with introducing an independent, open, competitive selection system for entry into the civil service. Examinations should be conducted in the form of tests and interviews, free from corruption. Second, the entire training system must be redesigned: practical workshops, online courses, international exchange programmes, and, most importantly, certification and attestation based on learning outcomes. Third, mandatory minimum knowledge standards for civil servants should be introduced and regularly updated. [8]

Third problem: corruption risks and lack of transparency. Corruption is one of the most severe diseases of the civil service. It not only causes economic damage but also undermines citizens' trust in the state. The main reasons for corruption are the closed nature of decision- making processes, weak oversight mechanisms, and low accountability. Some officials use their positions for personal gain, creating illegal advantages in the distribution of permits, licences, and state contracts. [9]

The most effective way to combat corruption is to build a fully transparent and traceable system. All public procurements should be conducted on open electronic platforms, the process of issuing permits should be automated, and the results of citizens' appeals should be published publicly. Furthermore, systems for verifying officials' income and asset declarations should be strengthened, and liability should be imposed not only on the guilty individual but also on their immediate supervisor. International experience shows that openness and automation sharply reduce corruption. [10]

Fourth problem: low material incentives. Civil servants' salaries are often lower than those for comparable positions in the private sector. As a result, the most talented and qualified people leave the civil service or look for additional sources of income. This can lead to hypocrisy and corruption. Low salaries also discourage young people from entering the civil service. [11]

The solution is to bring civil service salaries closer to market conditions and introduce a performance- based incentive system. This can be achieved not only by increasing the budget but also

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

by optimising the number of employees – removing ineffective staff and paying higher salaries to those who remain. Singapore followed exactly this path in its civil service reforms and achieved great success. In addition, supplementary social packages (insurance, housing loans, kindergartens, sanatorium treatment) could be introduced for civil servants. [12]

Fifth problem: slow and uneven digital transformation. In recent years, Uzbekistan has made great progress in developing the "e-government" system. However, digital services are not yet equally developed in all regions and all sectors. Some ministries and local administrations still cannot abandon paper workflows. Part of the population (especially the elderly and rural residents) lacks the skills to use digital services, creating a digital divide. [13]

The solution is to continue the gradual transfer of all public services online, while simultaneously launching large-scale digital literacy training programmes. In addition, information systems of different agencies should be integrated so that citizens do not have to enter the same data repeatedly. The central principle of digital transformation should be "convenience for the citizen". Every technological innovation should be asked: does it save citizens' time and money? Does it improve their quality of life?

Solving the modern problems of the civil service requires a comprehensive approach. Isolated measures (e.g., only raising salaries or only digitising) will not produce the desired result. Reforms must be carried out simultaneously and in a coordinated manner across all five directions. Furthermore, the results of reforms must be regularly monitored and adjustments made when necessary. [14]

Conclusion. The modern problems of the state civil service are complex and closely interconnected. Bureaucratic barriers, low personnel qualifications, corruption, insufficient salaries, and slow digital transformation all reduce the system's efficiency. However, these problems can and must be solved. Practical examples from around the world (Estonia, Singapore, Georgia) show the way. Uzbekistan is also moving along this path, taking into account its national characteristics.

The solutions proposed in this article require several stages of implementation. Short-term measures (within one year): introduce an open competitive selection system for civil service entry; fully digitalise the ten most frequently used public services; launch "cutting the red tape" projects to reduce bureaucratic barriers. Medium-term measures (within two to three years): activate a mandatory qualification upgrading system for all civil servants; sharply increase transparency in anti-corruption efforts; gradually move to a competitive salary system. Long-term measures (within five years): create a completely new model of the civil service based on advanced private-sector management principles.

The final conclusion is that the efficiency of the civil service depends directly on political will and a systemic approach. Only reforms that are long-term, consistent, and well-implemented – not superficial, one-off campaigns – can bring success. Every civil servant should feel the importance of their work for society's well-being, receive fair pay, and have the opportunity for a decent career. At the same time, citizens have the right to expect fast, high-quality and transparent services from the state. Finding the balance between these two sides – valuing the civil servant and satisfying the citizen – is the main goal of civil service reform.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

References

1. Ferlie E., Lynn L.E. & Pollitt C. The Oxford Handbook of Public Management. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. – pp.3-20.
2. World Bank. Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis. – Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2022. – pp.25-40.
3. Osborne D. & Gaebler T. Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector. – New York: Addison-Wesley, 1992. – pp.110-130.
4. OECD. Cutting Red Tape: Administrative Simplification in OECD Countries. – Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019. – pp.45-65.
5. Perry J.L. & Hondeghem A. Public Personnel Management: Current Concerns, Future Challenges. – London: Routledge, 2018. – pp.30-50.
6. UNDP. Competency-Based Training for Civil Servants: A Guide for Practitioners. – New York: UNDP, 2020. – pp.55-75.
7. Rose-Ackerman S. Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. – pp.55-80.
8. Transparency International. Global Corruption Report 2023. – Berlin: Transparency International, 2023. – pp.88-110.
9. Hood C. & Lodge M. The Politics of Public Service Bargains. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. – pp.45-65.
10. Singapore Public Service Division. Building a First-Class Civil Service: Singapore's Experience. – Singapore: PSD, 2021. – pp.33-55.
11. United Nations. E-Government Survey 2024. – New York: United Nations, 2024. – pp.120-140.
12. Pollitt C. & Bouckaert G. Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. – pp.120-145.
13. Borins S. The Challenge of Innovating in Government. – Arlington: IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2014. – pp.20-40.
14. Bovaird T. & Loeffler E. Public Management and Governance. – London: Routledge, 2016. – pp.90-110.