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

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MULTIPLE FORMS OF OWNERSHIP IN AGRICULTURE AND THE CHANGE IN THE PEASANT'S ATTITUDE TO LAND

Sayfiyev Sardor
Master's student, University of Information Technologies and Management
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23215051

Abstract. The article analyses the agrarian reforms carried out in Uzbekistan, particularly in the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions, from the late 1980s to the 2010s. It examines the allocation of household plots to the rural population, the transformation of state farms into other forms of ownership, the establishment of shirkat (cooperative) and dehkan farms and the introduction of leasing, as well as the impact of these processes on the peasant's attitude to land and property. The problems that arose in the course of the reforms and their causes are also shown.

Keywords: agrarian reform, mixed economy, household plot, privatisation, shirkat farm, dehkan farm, property share, family contract, leasing, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya.

СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ МНОГОУКЛАДНЫХ ФОРМ СОБСТВЕННОСТИ В СЕЛЬСКОМ ХОЗЯЙСТВЕ И ИЗМЕНЕНИЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ ДЕХКАНИНА К ЗЕМЛЕ

Аннотация. В статье анализируются аграрные реформы, проведённые в Узбекистане, в частности в Кашкадарьинской и Сурхандарьинской областях, с конца 1980-х до 2010-х годов. Освещены выделение населению приусадебных участков, преобразование государственных хозяйств в иные формы собственности, создание ширкатных и дехканских хозяйств, внедрение лизинга, а также влияние этих процессов на отношение дехканина к земле и собственности. Показаны проблемы, возникшие в ходе реформ, и их причины.

Ключевые слова: аграрная реформа, многоукладная экономика, приусадебный участок, приватизация, ширкатное хозяйство, дехканское хозяйство, имущественный пай, семейный подряд, лизинг, Кашкадарья, Сурхандарья.

INTRODUCTION

By the end of the 1980s, Uzbekistan, like the Soviet Union as a whole, faced a deep socio-economic crisis. The situation in the republic was considerably worse than in the other union republics, because the cotton monopoly that had dominated the economy for many years had prevented other sectors from developing. As of 1 January 1986, the population of the republic stood at 18,487 thousand, of whom 10,742 thousand (58.1%) lived in rural areas and 7,745 thousand (41.9%) in towns. Of the 1,444 thousand inhabitants of Kashkadarya, 1,079 thousand (74.7%) lived in the countryside

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and 365 thousand (25.3%) in towns [1, 6–7]. Given that most of the population in the southern regions lived in the countryside, it is clear that a large share of the social problems also fell on rural areas.

According to 1989 data, labour productivity in the republic was 40 per cent below the Union level in industry and half the Union level in agriculture. The number of unemployed reached 1 million, most of them in rural areas. The subordination of the strongest enterprises to the Centre made it impossible to resolve social problems. The Sho‘rchi cotton ginning plant alone made a net profit of 6 million rubles in 1990, of which only 1 million rubles remained at the enterprise, while 5 million rubles was taken away to Russia.

In these circumstances it was necessary to change the attitude of the peasant to land and property and to awaken a sense of personal interest in people. Taking the southern regions of Uzbekistan – Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya – as an example, this article analyses the establishment of multiple forms of ownership in agriculture, its results and its problems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study relies on the principles of historicism and objectivity and uses the methods of comparative analysis, systematisation and statistical analysis. The sources drawn upon include statistical collections, documents from the current archives of the regional hokimiyats (administrations), laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and decrees and resolutions of the President.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The appointment of I. Karimov to the leadership of the republic on 23 June 1989 had a positive effect on the situation. The new government embarked on large-scale reforms in the agrarian sector. On 15 August 1989, the resolution “On the Further Development of the Personal Subsidiary Plots of Collective Farmers, State Farm Workers and Citizens and of Individual Housing Construction” was adopted. At an enlarged meeting held in Tashkent on 17 August, the question of providing every rural family with a household plot was discussed; it was envisaged that an average of 25 sotka (0.25 hectare) of land would be allocated per person and that the area of household plots would be increased almost 4.5-fold. As a result, in 1989–1990 additional land was allocated to more than one and a half million families, and 700 thousand families received new household plots.

The allocation of land continued in subsequent years. In G‘uzor district of Kashkadarya region, 4,478 people applied for land in 1991; the applications of 2,251 of them were approved and 292 hectares were allocated for household plots. In 1991–1993, a further 550 thousand hectares of irrigated land was given to the population; in all, almost 700 thousand hectares was transferred from the public sector to the population, and more than 9 million people benefited from the produce of household plots. In Kashkadarya, 22 thousand hectares was given in 1992–1995 to landless and land-poor peasants, mainly young families. The aim was not only to obtain additional produce but also to provide jobs for the unemployed and to make housing construction possible.

Owning a personal plot changed the sense of ownership that the peasant felt towards the land for the better. From 1991, harvesting two or three crops a year increased the output of vegetables, melons,

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fruit, meat, milk and eggs. In 1993, collective and state farms in Kashkadarya earned an average income of about 2 thousand soums per hectare, whereas on household plots based on manual labour the figure reached 12 thousand soums. On personal holdings, 2,500 kg of milk was obtained per cow, against only 960 kg on state and collective farms.

The laws "On Land", "On Cooperation", "On Lease" and "On the Dehkan Farm" adopted in the first years of independence, together with Decree No. PF-295 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 29 November 1991 "On Further Strengthening Dehkan (Private) Farms and State Support for Entrepreneurial Activity in the Republic" [2], formed the legal basis for the creation of a mixed economy. State-owned enterprises were transformed into joint-stock companies, and ordinary rural citizens gained the opportunity to take part in the distribution of property as equal subjects. The share of the non-state sector in agricultural production reached 98 per cent in 1993. In 1992–1994, more than 98 thousand facilities belonging to agricultural enterprises were privatised. From 1992 to early 1995, 1,137 state farms (sovkhozes) were transformed into 530 collective farms, 350 cooperatives and more than 100 leasehold and other forms of ownership.

However, the abandonment of the kolkhozes and sovkhozes was a painful process. Taking advantage of the difficult situation of 1991–1993, some managers appropriated the property and machinery of the state sector or sold it off for next to nothing. Specialists with a sound knowledge of agriculture were pushed aside and replaced by "new" personnel who did not understand the sector. Vices such as formalism, nepotism and cronyism hindered the development of production.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 3 April 1996 "On Measures of State Support for Agricultural Production" deepened the reforms. In 1997, 1,374 collective farms, 99 leasehold farms, 51 joint-stock companies, more than 20 thousand private (fermer) farms, 526 private livestock farms and about 3 million personal household plots were operating in the countryside. Reorganising farms on the basis of property shares showed its advantages: the closed joint-stock companies named after Sh. Rashidov in Kashkadarya region and after N. Murodov in Surkhandarya region ended 1996 with profits of between 22 million and 33 million soums and paid dividends to their shareholders [3, 26]. In Kashkadarya, the number of farms that had moved to share-based relations rose from 2 to 17 in 1996, and in 1998, 27 farms took this path. Land was distributed among the members of a farm not in kind but in value terms, and its sale and purchase were not permitted.

On 30 April 1998, the Law "On the Agricultural Cooperative (Shirkat Farm)" was adopted [4]. Under this law, a shirkat farm is an independent economic entity with the rights of a legal person, based on the share principle, primarily on the family (collective) contract, and on the voluntary association of citizens. Each member was allotted a property share, which gave the right to receive dividends from the final income. Under the family contract, the family team undertook, on the basis of an agreement, to grow and deliver a specified quantity of produce. Article 2 of the Law "On the Dehkan Farm", adopted the same day, states: "A dehkan farm is a small-scale family commodity farm that produces and sells agricultural produce on the basis of the personal labour of family members on a

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household land plot granted to the head of the family for lifelong inheritable possession" [5]. Dehkan farms played an important role in eliminating rural unemployment and raising the incomes of the population.

In order to strengthen the material and technical base of the agrarian sector, the "O'zqishloqxo'jalikmashxolding" holding company was established by a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of 31 January 1996, and the "O'zqishloqxo'jalikmashlizing" leasing company by a resolution of 30 October 1999. In 2000, the leasing company supplied agriculture with 471 machines worth 700 million soums, and in 2001, through its 13 branches, with 2,339 tractors, 10 "Case-2002" cotton pickers and 494 other machines. The fact that leasing required no guarantee or insurance, that the machinery itself was sufficient as collateral and that only 15 per cent of the cost had to be paid in advance increased the number of users from year to year.

At the same time, serious problems also arose in the agrarian sector. First, land tax was collected in two instalments, by 1 July and 1 December, whereas the financial results of farms took shape only at the end of the year; farms unable to pay the tax by the first deadline were charged a penalty for each day of delay. Second, the district machine and tractor parks behaved like monopolists, demanding high fees for poor-quality services and pushing up production costs. Third, because of the system of mutual settlements through the banks, farms could not freely use their own funds. Fourth, serious shortcomings were allowed in plant breeding and seed production: as a result of sowing untested varieties unsuited to the conditions of the region, the cotton yield in Kashkadarya fell from 30.7 centners per hectare in 1991 to 23.8 centners.

Old administrative-command methods also persisted. In the autumn of 1998, on the instructions of certain senior officials, seed grain wholly unsuited to the conditions of Surkhandarya was distributed, and heavy pressure was put on the farmers and shirkat farm chairmen who refused to accept it. As a result, in 1999 the grain fields of the region were struck en masse by rust disease, the plan for grain sales to the state was fulfilled by only 54.8 per cent, and on many farms yields did not exceed 5–15 centners per hectare. Fulfilment of the plan for cotton sales to the state also declined from year to year: 97.5 per cent in 1995, 94.8 per cent in 1996, 90 per cent in 1997, 88.3 per cent in 1998 and 81.8 per cent in 1999. The region delivered 181 thousand tonnes less cotton to the state than planned. As of 1 February 2000, the receivables of agricultural enterprises exceeded 2 billion 503 million soums and their payables 6 billion 45 million soums; 47 collective and shirkat farms in the region ended 1999 with losses of 713 million 315 thousand soums.

In later years, state programmes played an important role in rural development. The State Programme "Year of Rural Development and Prosperity" (2009) planned the construction of 53 km of water supply network in Qamashi district and 98 km in Koson district of Kashkadarya region [6]. The State Programme "Year of the Strong Family" (2012) provided that in every rural district at least 50 young families would each receive one head of cattle and at least 200 young families 20 poultry each [7]. The State Programme "Year of Well-being and Prosperity" (2013) envisaged increasing lending to

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small business by 269.6 billion soums, of which 106 billion soums was to be directed to personal subsidiary and dehkan farms [8]. The standing of dehkan farms continued to grow: while in 2004 they produced 66 per cent of the gross agricultural output of the republic [9, 65], in January 2014 in Surkhandarya region alone this figure stood at 86.2 per cent.

Meanwhile, the question of raising labour productivity was neglected: some officials and scholars had formed the mistaken view that under market conditions labour productivity would rise of its own accord. Only in December 2017 did the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. Mirziyoyev, state in his address to the Oliy Majlis that the reports of 8 per cent growth and of more than one million jobs being created each year had been untrue and that there was a very serious problem in this area.

CONCLUSION

In the years of independence, Uzbekistan pursued its own agrarian policy based on studying the experience of advanced countries. The allocation of household plots to the population, the transformation of state farms into shirkat, dehkan and private (fermer) farms, the introduction of property shares and the family contract, and the launch of leasing services established multiple forms of ownership in the countryside. Most importantly, the attitude of the peasant to land and property changed, and a mentality of dependency gave way to enterprise and personal interest. At the same time, mistakes in the selection of personnel, the persistence of administrative-command methods and the neglect of seed production and agricultural techniques made the reforms less effective in the southern regions.

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