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DYNAMICS OF THE GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF MAHALLAS IN KASHKADARYA AND SURKHANDARYA REGIONS AND THE FACTORS INFLUENCING IT

Ixtiyor G‘aniyevich Jalilov
Acting Professor, Department of History Information Technologies and Management University

Abstract. This article analyzes the dynamics of growth in the number of mahallas in the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions and examines the main factors influencing this process from historical, demographic, and socio-economic perspectives. The research is based on materials from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, regional state archives, statistical data, and legal-regulatory documents. The study reveals that during the years of independence, the number of mahallas increased significantly due to steady population growth, rapid urbanization, the establishment of new residential areas, and reforms aimed at improving the activities of citizens' self-government bodies. The findings indicate that, in addition to demographic factors, changes in the territorial governance system, the development of social infrastructure, and state policies supporting the mahalla institution played a crucial role in the expansion of mahallas. The article also highlights the importance of mahallas in regional development, addressing local social issues, and strengthening civil society. The results of the study serve as an important scientific source for understanding the development trends of the mahalla institution in Southern Uzbekistan and its role in contemporary social governance processes.

Keywords: Mahalla institution, dynamics of mahalla growth, Kashkadarya region, Surkhandarya region, demographic growth, urbanization processes, citizens' self-government, territorial development, social infrastructure, civil society.

INTRODUCTION. The mahalla institution is one of the oldest and most enduring social institutions in Uzbek society, occupying an important place within the system of citizens' self-governance. During the years of independence, democratic reforms implemented in the country strengthened the legal status of the mahalla institution and significantly expanded its powers and functions. In particular, the rapid population growth in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions directly contributed to the expansion of the mahalla network. According to statistical data, while the population of Kashkadarya Region was 1.8 million and that of Surkhandarya Region was 1.5 million in 1991, these figures exceeded 3.6 million and 3 million respectively by 2025. As a result, the establishment of new residential areas, villages, and settlements led to a steady increase in the number of mahallas [1].

Today, more than 800 citizens' assemblies of mahallas operate in Kashkadarya Region, while nearly 700 function in Surkhandarya Region. In addition to demographic processes, urbanization, migration, reforms in the territorial governance system, and the development of social infrastructure have also influenced the growth in the number of mahallas. This article analyzes the dynamics of the increase in the number of mahallas in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions and examines the factors influencing this process from historical, statistical, and social perspectives [2].

LITERATURE REVIEW. The study of the growth dynamics of mahallas and the factors influencing them in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions is closely connected with research on the historical development of the mahalla institution. During the years of independence, a number of domestic and foreign scholars have conducted scientific studies on this issue. In particular, the works of A. Azizkhojayev, M. Qirgizboyev, R. Ubaydullayeva, S. Otamuratov, and A. Saidov extensively

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discuss the role of the mahalla institution within the system of civil society, its legal foundations, and its social functions. These studies evaluate the mahalla as an important institution for maintaining social stability through citizens' self-governance [3].

Foreign researchers such as P. Sievers, K. Collins, and M. Liu have examined the historical roots of the mahalla institution in Central Asia, its role in social governance, and its modern transformation. They regard the mahalla as a unique institution that unites local communities.

In addition, documents preserved in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the state archives of Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions, statistical data provided by the Statistics Agency, and reports of citizens' assemblies serve as important sources for studying the growth of mahallas. However, existing studies have not comprehensively analyzed the demographic, urbanization-related, and socio-economic factors affecting the growth dynamics of mahallas in Southern Uzbekistan. The scientific significance of this article lies in its attempt to address these issues through a historical-statistical approach.

Furthermore, documents preserved in the funds of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the state archives of Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions, statistical data from the Statistics Agency, and reports of citizens' assemblies of mahallas constitute important sources for studying the growth of mahallas. However, existing studies have not sufficiently and comprehensively examined the dynamics of mahalla growth and the demographic, urbanization-related, and socio-economic factors influencing this process in Southern Uzbekistan. The scientific significance of this article lies in its analysis of these issues through a historical and statistical approach.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS. The democratic reforms implemented in Uzbekistan during the years of independence contributed to improving the activities of citizens' self-governing bodies and strengthening the position of the mahalla institution in society. In particular, the dynamics of growth in the number of mahallas in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions developed in close connection with the country's demographic, socio-economic, and territorial development processes. During the course of the research, materials from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the state archives of Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions, statistical data, and reports of citizens' assemblies of mahallas were analyzed [4].

The analysis indicates that the substantial increase in population between 1991 and 2025 was one of the primary factors contributing to the growth in the number of mahallas in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions. According to official statistical data, the population of Kashkadarya Region increased from 1.8 million in 1991 to more than 3.6 million by 2025. Similarly, the population of Surkhandarya Region grew from 1.5 million to nearly 3 million during the same period. As a result of demographic growth, new settlements, residential complexes, and urban neighborhoods were established, which in turn necessitated the creation of new citizens' assemblies of mahallas [5].

An analysis of archival documents shows that in the early 1990s there were approximately 650 mahallas in Kashkadarya Region and around 580 in Surkhandarya Region. By 2025, these figures had increased to more than 800 and nearly 700 respectively. The increase in the number of mahallas was influenced not only by population growth but also by state policies aimed at supporting and developing the mahalla institution.

The findings of the study made it possible to classify the factors influencing the growth of mahallas into several groups. The first group consists of demographic factors [6]. Southern Uzbekistan is one of the most densely populated regions of the country. High birth rates, rapid natural population growth, and a significant proportion of young people contributed to the rapid increase in population. Consequently, existing mahallas expanded territorially, and in some cases the establishment of new mahallas became necessary.

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The second important factor is related to urbanization processes. During the years of independence, new residential areas were developed in Qarshi, Shahrisabz, Termez, Denau, Kitab, and other cities. According to archival records, dozens of new mahallas were established in the city of Qarshi alone between 2000 and 2025. Likewise, the number of mahallas steadily increased in newly developed residential areas surrounding the cities of Termez and Denau. Urbanization thus emerged as one of the principal factors driving the growth in the number of mahallas [7].

The third factor is associated with reforms implemented in the public administration system. The adoption of the Law "On Citizens' Self-Government Bodies" in 1993, along with legislative reforms carried out in 1999, 2013, and subsequent years, strengthened the legal status of the mahalla institution. As a result, a favorable legal framework was established for creating new mahallas, defining their territorial boundaries, and improving governance mechanisms [7].

The study also identified a close relationship between the growth in the number of mahallas and the development of social infrastructure. Archival data and reports from local authorities indicate that new mahallas were established in areas where new schools, preschool educational institutions, family polyclinics, sports facilities, and cultural centers had been constructed. In particular, the construction of new infrastructure facilities in the Koson, Qarshi, and Chiroqchi districts of Kashkadarya Region, as well as in the Denau, Jarkurgan, and Sherabad districts of Surkhandarya Region, stimulated the increase in the number of mahallas.

The analysis further demonstrates that the social functions of mahallas expanded alongside their numerical growth. Initially, mahallas were primarily engaged in organizing citizens' assemblies, maintaining public order, and coordinating community ceremonies. Over time, however, their responsibilities broadened considerably. Today, mahallas have become important institutions for social protection, employment promotion, family support, youth development, and the advancement of civil society [7].

The introduction of the "Iron Notebook" (Temir Daftar), "Women's Notebook" (Ayollar Daftari), and "Youth Notebook" (Yoshlar Daftari) systems beginning in 2020 further enhanced the significance of the mahalla institution. According to statistical data, hundreds of thousands of citizens in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions have been included in social assistance and state support programs through these mechanisms. This has strengthened the role of mahallas in addressing the needs of local communities.

Migration processes also emerged as an important factor contributing to the growth in the number of mahallas. The findings indicate that internal migration flows increased population density in certain rural and urban areas. In particular, the influx of people into economically developed territories led to the establishment of new mahallas. This trend is especially evident in the cities of Qarshi and Termez.

Archival sources suggest that the increase in the number of mahallas has also improved the effectiveness of local governance. The expansion of opportunities to work directly with citizens within smaller territorial units facilitated the prompt identification and resolution of community problems. Consequently, citizens' assemblies of mahallas have evolved into effective intermediary institutions between the state and society.

In recent years, the introduction of digitalization processes within the mahalla system has represented another important development. Electronic databases and digital governance systems have enhanced the efficiency of mahalla activities. Electronic monitoring systems operating within mahallas enable the rapid assessment of citizens' social conditions and the timely identification of local issues [8].

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The findings reveal that the growth in the number of mahallas in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions is not a random phenomenon but rather a complex social process closely linked to demographic development, urbanization, state policy, migration, and the advancement of social infrastructure. The increase in the number of mahallas has contributed to the further improvement of citizens' self-governance, enhanced the efficiency of territorial administration, and expanded public participation in governance [9].

Overall, the results of the study demonstrate that the growth in the number of mahallas in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions represents one of the significant outcomes of the socio-political and economic reforms implemented during the years of independence. The territorial expansion of the mahalla institution has become an important factor in promoting civil society development, improving public welfare, and ensuring social stability [10].

CONCLUSION. The findings of the study demonstrate that the increase in the number of mahallas in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Regions is closely associated with demographic development, urbanization processes, migration flows, the expansion of social infrastructure, and state policies aimed at supporting the mahalla institution. During the years of independence, population growth and the establishment of new residential areas significantly expanded the network of mahallas. Archival documents and statistical data confirm the growing importance of the mahalla institution in improving territorial governance, addressing community needs, and promoting the development of civil society. Consequently, the study scientifically substantiates that the mahalla institution has become an important and stable component of the modern system of social governance.

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