



HISTORY OF UZBEK MAKHALLA: PAST AND PRESENT

(On the example of the makhallas of Tashkent)

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the stages of formation and development of the institution of the makhalla will be covered by the example makhallas of the Tashkent. At the same time, the importance of the latest reforms carried out to improve the institution of the makhalla is highlighted. In particular, the role of makhallas in Tashkent in the development of the management of the makhalla institution is analyzed.

KEY WORDS: makhalla, law, decree, regulation, Chairman, commission, reform, self-government body, authority.

INTRODUCTION

The makhalla institution, which has a history of more than five thousand years, is currently a self-government institution of citizens in the Republic of Uzbekistan. After gaining independence in 1991, Uzbekistan has pursued the goal of establishing a democratic state and forming the civil society. As well as Uzbekistan also drew attention to the issue of restoration of the constitutional status of the lowest level of management unit – makhalla institution. To this end, Article 105 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan provides that “Self-governing bodies in settlements, kishlaks and auls, as well as in makhallas of cities, towns, settlements, kishlaks and auls, shall be assemblies of citizens electing Chairman (оқсақол). The procedure for the elections, organization of the work and powers of self-governing bodies shall be regulated by law”[1]. It is possible to see the respect for the generally recognized international legal requirements in this area by creating a constitutional framework for the activities of the self-governing bodies of citizens of Uzbekistan. Therefore, through this Uzbekistan has fully complied with Article 2 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which was adopted in Strasbourg, France, in 1985, which stated that "Local

self-government bodies must be recognized by the constitution and law of the country"[2].

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using objectivity, analysis, synthesis, comparative analysis, generalization, historical analysis, chronological methods.

RESULTS

It is known that the makhalla system has been recognized from ancient times as a democratic place where the national values and traditions of Uzbek people are respected and play a key role in their transmission to future generations. The background of Uzbek makhalla belongs to the Bronze Age, it is connected with the Sopollitepa, which is located in the Surkhandarya region (the southern region of Uzbekistan). In the archaeological studies carried out in this place, it was found that the place consists of eight parts, and it has proven in science that these eight parts are the first survivors of the structure that now we call makhalla [3].

The way of lifestyle and activities of our ancient ancestors was based on the collective principles, and the problems in this community were also addressed by the chairmen. Such noble values and traditions



have come through the makhalla system from ancient times to the present day.

As noted in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek language, the term “Makhalla” is an Arabic word and means “place”, it is a self-governing socio-territorial subdivision of a city that includes a particular area and its population united into one community [4]. The Makhalla has a great and long history, and its roots go back to the Bronze Age. The Makhalla was a historical community site, founded on the initiative of citizens in the territorial unit that united several families. The main factor that unites them was the fact that interconnected to each other by means of manufacturer forces. The first written source of the history in Central Asia – Avesto also promotes the survival of people based on solidarity by living as a community, solving existing problems and shortcomings with the community. As well as the chairman who was older than other members of the community according to his age and experience was a leader of the community. The tradition of following such beautiful qualities as managing the community by the elderly chairman, the solution of all problems in the Council of chairmen, the care for community members in the life of our ancestors, helping needy people has reached our lives through the makhalla system.

One of the medieval historian Abu Ja'far Narshakhi, in his work "History of Bukhara", written in the IX century, noted that there was 19 large-scale makhalla in Bukhara 1,100 years ago. These makhallas were self-governing and had their authority. This is reflected in the activities of the earliest states and their governing bodies on the territory of the Ancient East, including Uzbekistan [5]. Also, Abu Nasr Farabi, who lived with the idea of building a vibrant society, notes that "every person is born by nature he needs many things to live and to attain the highest level of maturity, but no one cannot achieve such things alone. A community of people is needed to have them," [6]. When a person is born, he or she enters a social partnership with a community of people to live, to gain their place and position in society. This means that through the community of people that Farabi refers to, order, compromise is formed in society and development can be seen. Conversely, when a community of people lives separately, dispersed, according to their own interests, this society faces scattered and dispersed.

In the 14th century, Amir Temur established a centralized state. The foundation of the Temurids' Empire has led to the socio-political and economic prosperity of the country. And stability in all areas has been further developed the makhalla system compared to previous periods, enriched with new traditions and customs and improved administratively. In the Empire of Amir Temur, the

types of handicrafts, the quantity and quality of the profession, the large-scale development of commerce and their consolidation into makhallas based on their occupations and professions are proof of our idea. It is true that before the founding of the Timur Empire, makhallas were established by profession, but by the time of Timur, the number and quality of such makhallas had increased and all the necessary conditions had been created for the people to do their work. Even after Timur added the most famous cities of the East to the composition of his state, he restored many villages and makhallas in Movarounnahr in a new style and named them by such names as Baghdad, Sheraz, Shom, Damascus, and created the environment, conditions and habits there in local villages and makhallas. Therefore, in the Empire of Timur, it was possible to meet a large number of makhallas and villages with professional names, such as locksmiths, coworkers, carpenters, potters, armor-makers, grasshoppers, and leather-makers. As a result of a special attitude towards the lower unit – the makhalla under the initiative and desire of Amir Temur, the medieval makhalla flourished and became the base of Timur in the management of the country. During this period, Tashkent was known as the center of Science, Culture and trade of the Timur Empire. In general, Tashkent along with being the capital city of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the present time, from the ancient times up to now, it has become an important strategic center in Central Asia as a socio-political, economic and Cultural Center. And the fact, location of city at the crossroads of trade routes connecting the West and the East was a key aspect that attracted the attention of representatives of the trade and tourism sector. This possibility of the city, as well as the scientists who were born in Tashkent and contributed to the development of world civilization and science, always attract the interest of foreign researchers.

In the second half of the XVIII century, Tashkent was divided into four districts, namely Sebzor, Beshyagach, Shaykhantakhur, and Kukcha, the city was surrounded by walls and has 12 gates. The rule of Tashkent from this period until the annexation Tashkent to the Kokand Khanate (1809 year) was initially pursued by four independent governors, but at the same time, they fight for a single government. In the early period, each district governor pursued an independent policy, in 1784, after the foundation of a single Tashkent principality the whole Tashkent was ruled by a single governor. Despite the unification into a single authority, the administrative positions of the districts, the Chairmen of makhalla continued to fulfill their regular duties. This indicates that the central authorities were less involved in the activities of makhallas in the 19th century in Tashkent. And during this period, each



district had dozens of makhallas, several mosques and madrasahs, baths and markets. In the second half of the XIX century, these facilities played an important role in the worship, education and training of the population in the mahallas in Tashkent. According to

Maev, during this period there were 149 makhallas in Tashkent, which had 12 madrasahs and 135 mosques [7]. (Table 1)

Table 1

Information on the number of mahallas located in each district of Tashkent in the late XIX century

No	Districts	Number of mahallas
1.	Sebzor	38
2.	Beshyogoch	32
3.	Shayxontohur	48
4.	Kukcha	31
total		149

Among the research conducted on the makhallas in Tashkent, Mallisky Nikolai Gurevich is widely mentioned. In his book "makhallas in Tashkent and vicinities" he expresses his thoughts about the makhallas in Tashkent. In particular, he studies and analyzes the works of previous authors Maev, Likoshin, Shishov, and Shishkin. He reminds that the list of makhallas was compiled for the first time in the article of Maev "Asian Tashkent", published in the collection "data for statistics of Turkestan" (edition IV, 1876). However, the negatively assesses that there were orthographic errors in the names of neighborhoods, mainly they are written according to the spelling of their names. Mallisky writes as following "In Shishov's work "Lines" is given a list of 154 makhallas, although the influence is felt, some changes and replenishments have been made" in his book titled as "makhallas of Tashkent and vicinities" [8]. At the beginning of the XX century, Mallisky compiled a list of about 280 mahallas and more than 170 vicinities only in the Old City itself [9]. The reason why we acknowledge Mallitsky's studies is reliable from other scientific researches is that he works as the head of the Self-Administration Department of Tashkent City since January 1907. As well as on the job title, he visits every makhalla and vicinity of the city on foot or by riding a horse. Having seen with his own eyes, he talked with the chairmen of the makhalla, educated people, and mentions the origins of the makhallas and their etymology.

Doctor of economic sciences, Professor Leonid Levitin also mentions the structure of the makhalla in his book "Uzbekistan - in the historical turning period". He notes that the number of makhallas in Tashkent was 140 in 1865, and in the early twenty years of the last century, their number reached 280[10].

During the Soviet times, the makhalla was operating separately from its legal status as before. Only on April 17, 1932, for the first time in the

Republic of Uzbekistan, a regulation on makhalla committees in Uzbek cities was introduced. The article 12 of the second regulation, which was adopted shortly thereafter (1961) states: "Mahalla (quarterly) committees are not allowed to carry out any financial and economic activities (to establish and use eating-houses, red tea houses, barbershops, etc.) they cannot participate in buying and selling, carrying out the work of renting, as well as renting apartments[11]. As stated in the legal-normative acts, the rights and authorities of the makhallas were limited during the Soviet Union. Because of artificial impediments and restrictions on the further development and improvement of the makhalla structure, the Makhalla system has been neglected.

The declaration of independence of Uzbekistan has allowed the country to get out of the socio-political and economic crisis of the past 150 years. Since independence, particular attention was paid to the restoration of the status and influence of the Makhalla institution. Over the past years, the law "About self-government institutions of citizens" was adopted three times. The first of these acts was adopted on September 2, 1993 [12]. The law "About self-government institutions of citizens" was adopted in more two times (1999 [13] and 2013 [14] years) in a new edition with the need for reforms carried out to deepening democratic reforms and to build civil society. By the adoption of these laws, the functions and powers of the institutions of the makhalla have expanded.

In the law "About self-government institutions of citizens", adopted in the 2013 year, there are many aspects that differ from previous ones. It has provided the opportunity for closer and more systematic interaction with the population, mainly by ensuring the independence of the makhalla, expanding its powers, and establishing commissions in important areas envisaged by the law. In particular, according to Article 18 of the Law "About self-government institutions of citizens", it is planned to establish eight



commissions at the assemblies of citizens in the main areas of their activities. They are as following: Reconciliation Commission; Commission on enlightenment and spirituality; commission on social support; Women's Commission; Commission on Minors, Youth and Sports; Commission on entrepreneurship and family business development; Commission on ecology and environmental protection, landscaping and planting; the Commission on Public Supervision and Consumer Protection [15]. These commissions organize their activities based on the regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In recent years, as a result of the growth of the population and expanding the territory of Tashkent, the number of makhallas is also increasing. For instance, at the beginning of the 90s of the XX century, about 450 neighborhoods were registered, in the information received from the current archive of the Council of Tashkent makhalla on October 5, 2019, 508 makhallas were registered [16]. At any period, the issue of employment of the population of most countries around the world is of serious concern. In particular, the issue of employment of the population in the Republic of Uzbekistan is a priority issue at the level of important public policy. The resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan № 944 “About approval on the regulation of Labor Relations in the bodies of self-government of citizens” plays an important role in the positive solution of the existing problems of employment of unemployed people. According to Part 2, 5 of the regulation on the regulation of Labor Relations in the self-governing bodies of citizens approved by this decision, the chairman of the assembly of citizens (oqsqoli) has the right to conclude employment contracts with them to attract unemployed people living in the territory of the makhallas to public affairs and the fees for their work is paid by the account of Public Works Fund under the Ministry of Labor and Employment of the Republic of Uzbekistan [17].

As a result, the chairman of makhalla has the opportunity to officially employ the unemployed and low-income people in his territory and, on his recommendation the unemployed people in makhallas have the opportunity to start his business by taking a loan from the bank. Indeed, through the ongoing reforms, the duties and powers of the makhalla are now expanding and becoming the most important unit in society, serving as a strong bridge between the people and the state as a result of the assumption of many functions performed by local governments.

In recent years, the legal framework of the makhalla institute has been further strengthened. According to it, the term of office of the chairmen of mahallas has been extended from 2.5 to 3 years [18].

It is necessary to note that the absence of a holistic number on the issue of the term of office does not correspond to international experiences.

2.5 year period does not allow elections to always be held at a certain time (in the spring). In addition, the deadline does not allow the chairmen to fully demonstrate their knowledge and management skills. In the process of developing the draft law, the experience of foreign countries was also thoroughly studied. In particular, the activities of local self-government bodies - municipal councils formed in Germany, England, Spain, Italy, Slovakia, Sweden, Poland, and other developed countries were studied in detail. In May 2019, in the makhalla elections held in May, the chairmen of the makhallas were elected for a period of 3 years. On February 12, 2020, under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mirziyoyev, a videoconference was held dedicated to the improvement of the makhalla system, strengthening peace and tranquility in makhallas, and prevention of crime. In this videoconference 38 laws and regulations related to the institution of the makhalla were adopted, more than 50 improvements were made and the term of office of the chairman of the makhalla was changed from three to five years. Three deputies position of Chairmen is introduced [19]. This reform envisages further clarification of the tasks and powers of the makhalla institution and its gradual development.

CONCLUSION

Tashkent, one of the most ancient cities in Central Asia, has passed various stages of development throughout its long history. As well as, the name of the city has changed several times during those times. The makhallas of Tashkent flourished during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids.

During the period of the Russian Empire, particularly in the Soviet Union, there was no attention given to the system of makhalla because of artificial impediments and restrictions on the development and improvement of the neighborhood.

Since the first days of independence, a number of normative-legal documents were adopted in the development of the makhalla Institution and enriched with traditions and innovations using experiences of the world.

Today, the makhalla institutions are a dwelling of democracy, which plays an important role in the real sense of citizens being an active member of society.

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