

## **During the Years of Independence, Efforts to Incentivize Teachers in the Southern Regions**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In recent years, significant attention has been paid in Uzbekistan to enhancing the status and prestige of teachers, as well as expanding their rights and benefits. "If we do not provide financial incentives for schoolteachers and improve their quality of life, we cannot speak of reforms and results," stated the President. In 2020, measures were planned to increase the salaries of public education employees and to provide housing and vehicle loans to attract teachers to remote districts. To make full use of these opportunities, teachers are actively improving their knowledge and professional skills while participating in community activities.*

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

**Received** 04 Nov 2024

**Received** in revised form

05 Nov 2024

**Accepted** 14 Dec 2024

**Keywords:** Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, teacher status, education reforms, teacher incentives, public education excellence, title, badge of honor, educational institution, sector veterans.

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**Relevance:** Significant efforts have been made to encourage teachers in the southern regions of Uzbekistan. For example, between 1991 and 2004, 141 teachers in Kashkadarya region were awarded state prizes, 690 were recognized as "Exemplary Public Education Employees of the Republic," and 706 received the "Dedicated Educator of Kashkadarya Region" badge [1]. In particular, in 1993-1994 alone, 17 schoolteachers from the Karshi district were awarded the titles and badges of honor such as "Excellence in Public Education of Uzbekistan," "Honored Educator of Uzbekistan," and "Honored Public Education Worker of Uzbekistan." Additionally, 2 teachers from the district were awarded the "Shuhrat" Order, and 1 teacher received the "For a Healthy Generation" Order [2].

In Surxondaryo region's Sherobod district, teachers have been appropriately encouraged for their contributions to introducing new pedagogical technologies and nurturing students in line with modern requirements. Erkin Khojamberdiev from School No. 1, Mukhabbat Abdulazizova from School No. 5 received the honorary title "Merited Youth Mentor of the Republic"; Tulg'anoy Bibitova, the principal of School No. 1; M. Haydarova, an elementary school teacher at School No. 60; N. Ergasheva, the head of Kindergarten No. 11; and Sojida Khojiahmedova from School No. 3 were awarded the "Shuhrat" medal. Additionally, Iso Allaberdiyev from School No. 15 was bestowed the 1st Degree "For Healthy Generation" Order. A total of 116 teachers in the district were honored as "Distinguished Educators of Uzbekistan," and 96 were awarded the title of "Highly Qualified Teacher[3]."

Furthermore, in every district of Surxondaryo region, public education workers have been duly recognized by the government for their contributions to the development of education during the years of independence. For example, in 1994, Qurbanazar Ergashev, a biology teacher at School No. 24 in Jarkurgan district, received the title "Merited Educator of the Republic of Uzbekistan." In 1995, Ibrahim Yuldashev, a language and literature teacher from School No. 15, was honored as a "People's Teacher."

In 1996, Zoir Choriyev, a history teacher from School No. 13, was awarded the “Shuhrat” medal. In the same year, Lyubov Mikhailovna Karpenko, a Russian language and literature teacher from School No. 1, received the “Friendship of Nations” Order.

In 1997, Toshmir Ismoilov, a physics teacher from School No. 33, was awarded the 1st Degree “For Healthy Generation” Order. In 1998, Mamarasul Khudoyberdiyev, a biology teacher from School No. 19, was given the 2nd Degree “For Healthy Generation” Order. In 2000, Norpulat Norbekovich Tojiyev, a physical education teacher at School No. 21, earned the honorary title “Merited Master of Sports of Uzbekistan.” In 2001, Eshonqul Chorshanbiyevich Kholmirezayev, a history teacher from School No. 36, was awarded the “Shuhrat” medal. In 2002, Mumin Shoimardonov, a chemistry teacher from School No. 15, received the “Shuhrat” medal. In 2003, Nortura Fayzullayev, a labor teacher from School No. 7, was awarded the “Labor Glory” medal. In 2004, Qulmomin Khojaliyevich Allamurodov, a biology teacher from School No. 30, received the “Respect of the Nation” Order. In 2007, Soliya Abulovna Mamatkulova, a language and literature teacher at School No. 21, was awarded the “Shuhrat” medal[4].

### **Methods and Degree of Study:**

For their significant contributions to education and upbringing, Ra'no Sodiqova was awarded the "For a Healthy Generation" order, Muḥabbat Sharopova received the "Labor Glory" order, and Khayrulla Rahmatov and Muḥabbat Izzatullayeva were honored with the title of "Devoted Teacher." Bōritosh Hamroyeva earned the title of "People's Teacher" [5].

During the 2001–2002 academic year, the "Creative Teacher" competition was held at the national level. At the republic stage of the competition, participants included M. Muḥyiddinova, a teacher from School No. 47 in Shahrisabz District of the Qashqadaryo Region; N. Panjiev, a teacher from Specialized School No. 1 in U. Yusupov District; and M. Zaripova, a teacher from School No. 17 in Qarshi District [6].

In the 2003 "Creative Teacher" competition, the creative teachers from Schools No. 14 and 43 in the Surkhandaryo Region, Gulzo'da Muhammadiyeva and Orzigul Mamayusupova, won first place in the fields of children's literature and drama within the region [7].

In 2004, Farogat Mamatova, an English teacher at Oybek School No. 12 in Qarshi District, secured an honorable second place in the "Teacher-2004" competition [8].

On July 28, 2005, the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan announced an order to hold the "Best Subject Teacher of the Year" competition. The contest was conducted annually at the republic and regional levels. In the Surkhandaryo Region, Soliya Tojiyeva, a teacher of Uzbek language and literature at School No. 27 in Jarkurgan District, won the regional competition and secured an honorable third place [9].

In the 2005-2006 academic year, the IV stage of the “Best Subject Teacher of the Year” competition was held in the Surkhandaryo region. At the III stage of the competition, Salomat To‘raqulova (a history teacher) from Specialized School-Internat No. 15 took third place, Bobur Sagizov (an informatics teacher) also took third place, and Gulbinisa Hayitova (a physics teacher) won first place, receiving a monetary reward equivalent to 100% of their monthly salary. Sanam Ahmedova (a psychologist from School No. 2) was rewarded with 60% of her monthly salary, while Nasiba Yahyoeva (a physics teacher from School No. 27) and Tojikhon Khushvaqtova (a music teacher from School No. 10) received 40% of their monthly salary as incentives [10].

In 2016, on the eve of the 25th anniversary of Independence, one of the four nominees awarded the title of "Hero of Uzbekistan" was Muḥabbat Sharapova, a mathematics teacher at Specialized School-Internat No. 2 in Qarshi city [11]. Born in 1949 in the city of Shahrisabz, Kashkadarya region, she graduated from the Mechanics-Mathematics Faculty of Samarkand State University in 1971. Her career began as a teacher at School No. 5 in Qarshi city. Since 2000, she has worked as a senior-level mathematics teacher at the Qarshi State Specialized School-Internat No. 2.

In 2002, she participated in creating a methodological manual for teachers based on a new educational program for the 7th-grade geometry textbook (authored by B. Haydarov and others) as part of a tender announced by the Ministry of Public Education of Uzbekistan to develop a new generation of school

textbooks. These manuals gained popularity across the region. Under her initiative, around 10 seminars were organized to familiarize regional and city students with the State Educational Standards (SES) and the methodological features of new textbooks.

Under her guidance, 15 students participated in national subject Olympiads, and nine students competed in international Olympiads. At her school, she founded the "Zakovat" (Intelligence) intellectual club, and its students participated in the "Iqtidor" (Talent) program on national television, winning second place [12].

Such proud educators were numerous in the Surkhandarya region as well. One of them was Aripova Shohida Rahmatovna, who was born on April 1, 1958, in a working-class family in Buka District, Tashkent Region. From 1973 to 1975, Shohida Aripova studied at the Republican Boarding School for Young Physicists and Mathematicians in Tashkent. Between 1975 and 1980, she attended the Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics at Tashkent State University, earning a specialization as a mathematics teacher.

From 1980 to 1992, she worked as a mathematics teacher at School No. 6 named after M. Gorky in Termiz District, Surkhandarya Region. Starting in 1994, she transitioned to the Al-Hakim at-Termizi Boarding Lyceum No. 6 in Termiz City, continuing her work as a mathematics teacher. In 2007, she was appointed the director of this lyceum.

From 2009 to 2014, Shohida Aripova served as a deputy of the People's Deputies Council in Termiz City. From 2014 to 2019, she was a deputy in the Surkhandarya Regional People's Deputies Council. Additionally, she served as a member of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan from 2010 to 2019.

Since 1994, Shohida Aripova has been a mathematics teacher of the highest qualification category. Over the years, she received numerous awards and recognitions, including the "Outstanding Educator" badge in 1996, the honorary title of "People's Teacher of Uzbekistan" in 2007, the "20 Years of Uzbekistan's Independence" commemorative badge in 2011, the "For Selfless Service" Order in 2014, the "25 Years of Uzbekistan's Independence" commemorative badge in 2016, and the "25 Years of Uzbekistan's Constitution" commemorative badge in 2017[13].

### **Research Results:**

In Uzbekistan, the annual "Teacher of the Year" competition was organized to enhance the professional competencies of general education school teachers, promote the use of modern pedagogical and information-communication technologies, and improve the quality and effectiveness of education. The most recent competition was held between April 30 and May 4, 2018, at the Professional Development and Retraining Center for Public Education Employees under Termez State University.

In the regional stage of the competition in Surkhandarya region, the following participants competed in various subjects: 14 in the native language and literature, 9 in Russian (as a native language), 13 in Russian (for Uzbek speakers), 14 in English, 12 in German, 9 in French, 14 in mathematics, 13 in computer science, 14 in chemistry, 14 in biology, 14 in physics, and 14 in history.

Award-winning participants by subject and location included three from Uzun district (German, biology, and computer science), two from Termez city (Russian and chemistry), two from Termez district (mathematics and history), one from Kumkurgan district (native language and literature), one from Shurchi district (Russian for Uzbek speakers), one from Jarkurgan district (English), one from Angor district (French), and one from Denov district (physics). These teachers earned the right to compete in the Republic-level stage of the "Teacher of the Year" competition[14].

The third Republic-level stage was held in 11 provinces, with biology competitions hosted in Surkhandarya.

However, during certain periods, the status and value of teachers were significantly underestimated. The roles and responsibilities of teachers, as well as their societal position, varied across different stages of the country's development. Thousands of teachers across the nation celebrated their professional holidays in cotton fields, while tens of thousands of students and minors were also mobilized for agricultural labor.

For example, a teacher from a Fergana educational institution of that time mentioned:

“...To ensure studies weren’t disrupted, 12 teachers collectively paid 5,000 UZS each per day to hire laborers. However, a new order mandated that teachers stay in dormitories and pick cotton for 10 days, requiring us to hire two laborers for 400,000 UZS. Finding 50,000 UZS upfront is much harder than earning 5,000 UZS daily.”

Instances were reported where teachers were forced to stay in gymnasiums converted into barracks to pick cotton. When a subject teacher was sent to the fields, their classes were often taken over by teachers of other subjects. For instance, mathematics lessons were occasionally taught by Uzbek language teachers.

In July and August of the same year, the directors of School No. 11 in Karshi city and School No. 33 in Karshi district were fined for compelling teachers on vacation to perform forced labor. This was disclosed during a press meeting by the regional Employment Department on Wednesday, September 18.

Anvar Ganiev, the director of School No. 11 in Karshi city, and Firuza Ahmedova, the director of School No. 33 in Karshi district, were fined three times the minimum monthly wage for these violations[15].

On August 23, 2020, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, during a video conference dedicated to the development of the public education system, improving the qualifications and social standing of teachers, and enhancing the moral upbringing of the younger generation, stated:

"We have not focused on the financial condition and working environment of teachers. We involved them in cotton picking, street cleaning, and tasks unrelated to their profession, thereby undermining their reputation. Without thoroughly studying the situation at the grassroots level or understanding the real circumstances, many of our programs were implemented partially or inadequately. We have hardly considered training teachers for the new era, developing pedagogy, innovative teaching technologies, or creative approaches.[16]"

In recent years, recognizing the significant role of male teachers in the school education system, several measures have been implemented in this regard. As a result, 12,871 male teachers returned to schools. Strict measures were taken to incentivize teachers' work. From 2017 to 2019, teachers' salaries increased by an average of 2.5 times. Additional salary bonuses of up to 50% were paid to teachers working in remote areas, encouraging many to take up positions in such locations. Furthermore, retired teachers who continued their work were granted full pension benefits.

"We regard our esteemed teachers, dedicated school principals, and the veterans of the field as the backbone and foundation of our nation," said the President. "We will continue to allocate resources and opportunities for the development of the school system. The fate of our future generations, the destiny of our entire nation, people, and state, is tied to our respected teachers.[17]"

### **Summary:**

In Uzbekistan, the preparation of qualified personnel has become one of the main priorities of state policy. Human resource development has been established as a key condition for improving the education system. Accordingly, efforts to supply educational institutions in Uzbekistan, particularly in the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions, with teaching staff have improved, with the number of specialists increasing year by year. However, a significant shortage of personnel in certain specialties was strongly felt in educational institutions. Providing rural schools with teachers for subjects like foreign languages, physics, and history became one of the serious challenges. As a result of strict measures taken by the state to ensure the social protection of teachers, salaries were increased, and benefits were introduced, such as exemptions for utility payments and privatization of housing.

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