



THE MAHALLA SYSTEM AS A BASIS FOR SOCIO-SPIRITUAL STABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the role of the mahalla institution in ensuring socio-spiritual stability in the context of New Uzbekistan based on a comprehensive approach. The findings show that within the framework of “family–mahalla–school” cooperation, the mahalla is emerging as a key social space that strengthens youth spirituality, increases social activity, and ensures national solidarity.

KEYWORDS: Mahalla, socio-spiritual stability, New Uzbekistan, social capital, national solidarity, civil society, globalization, ideological threats, employment, poverty reduction, community control.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of New Uzbekistan, there is virtually no sector or region untouched by large-scale reforms. Transformations aimed at building a free and prosperous society, creating достой living conditions, and recognizing human dignity as the highest social value represent a qualitatively new stage in the country's development.

Today, the mahalla is no longer just an administrative-territorial unit, but is becoming a key social mechanism that ensures spiritual stability, forms social capital, and determines the effectiveness of public policy. Currently, there are more than 9,400 mahallas in Uzbekistan. As a result of the implementation of the “seven-member system” (yettlik), over 100 types of services—including credit, subsidies, and financial assistance—are now delivered at the mahalla level. These opportunities have contributed to lifting 7.5 million citizens out of poverty, reducing unemployment by half, and modernizing more than 3,500 mahallas.

Additionally, the term of office for mahalla chairpersons has been extended from 3 to 5 years, while they have been provided with necessary resources, legal frameworks, and working conditions. The placement of banking and tax representatives within mahallas has marked a new stage in implementing economic projects at the local level.

In the Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people on December 26, 2025, special emphasis was placed on the mahalla institution, highlighting its strategic role as a central link in strengthening social capital and national unity. Social capital is generally understood as trust, cooperation, social norms, and networks of interaction among members of society. In Uzbekistan, the mahalla serves as a natural social environment that fosters trust and solidarity. Under globalization, elements of “chaos” in the global information space are intensifying. Various ideological threats

increasingly influence the minds of youth, spreading ideas of individualism, egocentrism, and consumerism that contradict traditional Eastern values based on collectivism. In such conditions, increasing social activity becomes a key factor in building a stable society capable of resisting ideological threats. In environments where solidarity and cooperation are strong, the ability to counter such threats significantly increases. An active individual is not only guided by personal interests but is also capable of aligning them with the interests of society and the state.

A review of our nation's history shows that the most valuable human qualities—honesty, integrity, honor, modesty, compassion, and diligence—are primarily formed within the family. In this sense, the family represents a micro-environment within society. The theory of social capital by James Coleman is particularly relevant here. He identified three key factors influencing a child's development: financial capital, human capital, and social capital. According to Coleman, social capital—meaning trust, relationships, and the moral environment within the family—plays a decisive role in a child's future.

The mahalla, as the second most important institution of socialization after the family, serves as a practical platform within the “family–mahalla–school” system for fostering patriotism, diligence, moral stability, and active citizenship among youth. Activities such as sports clubs, educational courses, and volunteer movements organized within mahallas actively engage young people in social life and strengthen their sense of responsibility and solidarity. In recent years, systematic reforms have been implemented in Uzbekistan to curb crime, ensure public safety, and improve crime prevention systems. These reforms have also been recognized internationally. For instance, Uzbekistan ranked 29th out of 146 countries in the “Safety Perceptions Index” during 2021–2024. The effective functioning of the “mahalla seven,” early detection of offenses, and preventive mechanisms have played an important role in achieving these results.

One of the primary functions of the mahalla is its social role. Support from the mahalla is especially important for low-income families, individuals who have lost their breadwinner, people with disabilities, and elderly individuals living alone. During the First International Conference titled “The Role of Mahalla in Improving Living Standards,” held in Samarkand on October 2–5, 2024, issues such as entrepreneurship development, employment, poverty reduction, and social assistance were discussed in detail. The conference concluded with the adoption of a Declaration emphasizing the increasing importance of the mahalla institution and the ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening its institutional role.

An important manifestation of social capital in the mahalla is normativity. Moral norms accepted by the community, national and religious traditions, and ethical standards regulate individual behavior and create an additional system of social control beyond formal legal mechanisms. For example, socially condemned behaviors—such as domestic violence, excessive extravagance, negligence, and social irresponsibility—are relatively rare in mahallas. Following the introduction of the “mahalla-based approach,” entrepreneurial initiatives, cooperative models, and family businesses have become more active at the local level. In this process, the mahalla serves as a mediator that transforms social capital into economic capital. Communities built on trust and solidarity face lower transaction costs when implementing economic projects.

Conclusion



In the context of ongoing reforms in New Uzbekistan, the mahalla institution is strengthening as a key component ensuring socio-spiritual stability. It is not only an administrative unit but also a vital social space that preserves moral values, social cohesion, and sustainable development of society.

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