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THE ISSUES OF USING THE PRINCIPLE OF MERITOCRACY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to explore the importance of the principle of meritocracy in the civil service system of Uzbekistan. The article analyzes the essence of the principle of meritocracy and the specifics of the application process in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The author has studied the organizational and legal issues of recruitment to the civil service, selection of management staff and the formation of reserve personnel for the civil service on the basis of the principle of meritocracy. Based on the research, a number of suggestions and recommendations have been put forward.

KEYWORDS

Principle of meritocracy, civil service, civil servant, state civil service, personnel, competence, vacancy, open competition.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important indicators of the development of a particular state is related to the order in which the system of public administration is established. The system of public administration

should be organized and followed, first of all, on the principle of separation of powers. It can also be said that the most appropriate, high competencies are the involvement of personnel in the civil service and the

existence of a certain system in this regard determines the effectiveness of public administration.

One of the main goals of the new Uzbekistan is to train worthy personnel and through them to develop both the public and private sectors. It is becoming increasingly important to attract the most deserving staff to government agencies on a competitive basis. The most important feature of the principle of meritocracy is the admission of personnel to public organizations on the basis of open competitions.

The scientific and theoretical significance of the research is the development of the scientific foundations of the principle of meritocracy, in particular, the definition of the concept through the analysis of the views of national and foreign scholars, the experience of foreign countries and normative legal documents. The practical application of the principle of meritocracy as effectively as possible and the improvement of related legislation constitute the practical significance of the article.

MAIN PART AND DISCUSSION

The concept of meritocracy is a combination of the words “meritus” (translated from Latin as “most capable”) and “kratos” (translated from Greek as “authority”), meaning “authority of the most gifted” [1]. Professor H.T.Azizov draws attention to the fact that the merikotratiya is even more important in the process of holding leadership positions. In his view, the concept is, firstly, a system of appointing leaders from among the talents, and secondly, to create the initial conditions for talented and hardworking people to be able to hold high social positions in the future [2, P.6.]. Researcher C.Simard points out that meritocracy, along with ability, is a system in which achievements are the basis for individuals to rise to higher levels [3]. In our opinion, this principle implies the selection of

personnel with the highest competence (knowledge, skills and abilities) on a competitive basis, regardless of social origin, social status, financial status, gender or power.

The concept of meritocracy was first used negatively in 1954 by Hannh Arendt in her article “The Crisis in Education” [4]. Daniel Bell, author of the theory of postindustrial society, sees meritocracy as the “principle of achievement” as one of the foundations of the new information society. As Bell points out, seniority is achieved through education, skills, and personal service [5]. The concept of meritocracy was introduced to science by the British sociologist and politician Michael Young. In his 1958 book, “The Rise of Meritocracy: 1807-2033”, meritocracy is an equal society, and one's place in society depends on one's talent and intelligence. Social benefits will be distributed from the most deserving to the least deserving” [6].

The American philosopher John Rowles, on the other hand, in his study explores the principle of meritocracy from the point of view of justice and emphasizes it as one of the principles of justice. In general, Rawls's principles of justice were based on “equal treatment” of social partnership. In other words, the idea of all-round equality of social institutions is an important element for Rowles. Rowles argues that meritocracy can only be achieved if institutional and social equality is ensured [7].

As noted above, the principle of meritocracy applies to both the public and private sectors, and it can be seen that it is widely used in the civil service. Meritocracy is also widely used in personnel management in most large economic corporations. These features are reflected not only in the recruitment of staff based on their abilities, but also in the fact that the views of employees are taken into account in making important

decisions about business processes, in particular, the future of the corporation. The system can be seen in the world-famous corporations Amazon and Uber [8].

It should be noted that the principle of meritocracy has a number of important features:

First, personnel are recruited to government agencies on the basis of open competitions;

Second, in open competitions, the knowledge, skills and abilities of the candidates are evaluated on the basis of objectivity and equality, and the most suitable ones are selected;

Third, the performance and level of knowledge of personnel working in organizations is assessed on the basis of equality on the basis of various criteria, including KPI (Key Performance Indicators);

Fourth, as a result of the assessment of personnel working in organizations, their future activities in the organization can be addressed. For example, there may be promotions and financial incentives for successful employees, retraining or retraining of unsuccessful employees, and in some cases dismissals.

In general, the principle of meritocracy implies an objective and equal treatment of all candidates and cadres in entering and passing the civil service.

In some countries, in particular, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland, Finland, Singapore, the principle of meritocracy has been effectively established. Professor H.T. Azizov pays special attention to the experience of China, Singapore and South Korea on the principle of meritocracy [2, P.7-9.].

It is well known that many processes precede concept as an essence. In fact, the concept has a relative

meaning. This issue did not bypass the concept of meritocracy. Although the concept of meritocracy and the principle of public service developed in the last century, as discussed above, the appointment of positions based on ability was formed in some countries as early as BC. The first elements of meritocracy, Western Itzhak Galnoor and Jennifer Oser, appeared in Ancient China and Ancient Egypt in the second half of the 3rd millennium BC. According to them, the meritocratic tradition continued in the Middle Ages and was effectively established in Byzantium, the Sassanids (Iran), the Arab Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire. It can be seen that the principle of merit has also been used to retrain and examine the officials in charge of the colonial territories of the state. For example, in 1806, a college was established in London to improve the skills and attestation of British officials who ruled India [9].

Researchers Ann Paludan [10] and Derke Bodde [11] note that the principle of meritocracy is effectively established in China and is more advanced than in other countries. In ancient China, there were trust systems for selecting the best civil servants, in which anyone, regardless of social background and financial status, could hold an important public office. This system was used by the Sin and Han dynasties in the BC period, and by the Sui and Tang dynasties in the AD civil service personnel policy [12].

One of the most important tasks of the New Uzbekistan has been to select the most suitable personnel on the basis of competitions and thus attract the most qualified personnel to government agencies. At the pre-election meeting of the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan on October 19, 2016, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said that one of the biggest problems of the state is the selection and appointment of personnel, emphasizing that without

effective system of training and selection of honest and patriotic personnel [13].

On February 7, 2017, the Presidential Decree approved the "Action Strategy for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan" and identified the improvement of the state personnel policy as one of the priorities of the Action Strategy [14].

On the basis of the implementation of the Action Strategy, on September 8, 2017, the Presidential Decree approved the "Concept of Administrative Reform in the Republic of Uzbekistan." One of the priorities of the concept of administrative reform was the issue of civil service reform. The concept defines the tasks of establishing a state body responsible for public personnel policy and the admission of personnel to the civil service by this body on the basis of open competition [15].

Thus, through the concept of administrative reform, the first fundamental foundations for the introduction of the principle of merit for the civil service of our country have been created.

On May 30, 2018, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a resolution "On measures to create a modern system of selection of promising management personnel on a competitive basis" [16]. This decision was a legal step towards the first application of the principle of meritocracy in our country. In accordance with the resolution, the Republican competition "Taraqqiyot" for the selection of qualified management staff was introduced. With this decision, the Regulations of the competition were developed, which defined the terms, procedures and requirements for candidates. The competition was held for the first time in cooperation with the Academy of Public Administration and relevant ministries and departments in 2018-2019, 8334 candidates were

registered, 3825 of them met the qualification requirements and were recommended to participate in the competition. By the end of the four-stage competition, 150 candidates had arrived, and 50 participants had won the competition in 16 areas and held important positions throughout the country. It should be noted that the competition was based on the principle of merit. Candidates' IQ test, knowledge of foreign languages, psychological stability, as well as knowledge of political, legal and socio-economic spheres, preparation of written analytical material, organizational and leadership skills and problem-solving skills are gradually tested. , in the final round, the most deserving became the winners of the competition based on their competencies of structural thinking, leadership skills, management professionalism and flexibility to change [17].

On the basis of the experience of the Republican competition "Taraqqiyot" for the selection of qualified leadership, the introduction of the principle of meritocracy based on open competitions in the civil service of the Republic has begun. The most important step in this direction was the Presidential Decree "On measures to radically improve the personnel policy and the system of civil service in the Republic of Uzbekistan" adopted on October 3, 2019 [18]. This decree identified the most important areas for improvement in the field of state personnel policy. The Agency for Public Service Development under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been established as the authorized state body in this area [19]. The introduction of the principle of meritocracy in the civil service was one of the most important aspects of the Decree.

The Presidential Decree defines the principle of meritocracy as a concept that provides for the admission of the most suitable candidates to the civil

service and the growth of their positions on the basis of an objective assessment of their skills and activities in the service. According to the decree, from January 1, 2020 in the Ministries of Employment and Labor Relations, Finance and Justice and the People's Bank, as well as in several district (city) khokimiyats will be recruited on an open basis. This system is expected to be implemented from January 1, 2021 in all public administration bodies, organizations and executive bodies of local government. From September 1, 2021, it is planned to hire staff on the basis of open competition in organizations with a state share of more than 50% [20]. The Agency for Public Service Development was tasked with implementing this process.

It should be noted that there are two types of admission to the civil service:

1. Admission to the civil service on the basis of appointment;
2. Admission to the civil service on a competitive basis.

In many developed countries, only the head of state and government has the right to recruit by appointing staff to the most important positions in the civil service, and there is open competition for all other positions. In our opinion, the recruitment of staff to the civil service on the basis of the principle of meritocracy on the basis of open selection has several important features.

First, this process serves to recruit the most qualified and qualified personnel for the civil service and thereby improve the efficiency of the civil service. Sociologist E. Litvintseva notes that the admission of personnel to the civil service on the basis of open competition provides organizations with the most qualified and suitable personnel [21, P.140-148.]. One can agree with

the scholar. Indeed, growth and development will take place where there is healthy competition. This issue is also specific to the state personnel policy system. Therefore, open competitions for vacant positions ensure that the most competent personnel enter the civil service. The positive feature of this trend is the potential for the civil service to work harder and prepare for the competition. It can also be said to lead civil servants to strive to be worthy for their positions as well.

Second, the admission of staff to the civil service on the basis of the principle of meritocracy on the basis of open selection also leads to the emergence of constitutional rights of citizens. In this regard, several norms of our Constitution can be considered. For example, Article 18 states that citizens have equal rights and equality before the law, Article 32 states that citizens have the right to participate directly in the management of public affairs, and Article 37 states that everyone has the right to choose the profession of their choice [22]. Some provisions of the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan also complement the above. In particular, Article 6 of the Code states that every citizen has the same opportunities to obtain labor rights, while Article 78 states that illegal denial of employment is not allowed. It should be noted that these norms also apply to the civil service [23]. From the point of view of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the same opportunity to enter the civil service. Article 21 states that "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country" [24].

From 2020, the recruitment of staff to the civil service on the basis of the principle of meritocracy on the basis of open competition has begun. Initially, the agency

developed a single open portal for vacancies of civil servants (vacancy.argos.uz). Competitions for civil service vacancies are announced through this portal. A citizen can apply for any vacancy. Today, open competitions are held in several stages.

At the initial stage, the documents of the candidates for the vacant position are examined for compliance with the qualification requirements for the position, and the participants who meet them are admitted to the test stage.

In the next stage, the candidates' knowledge and skills in the fields of history (spirituality), economics, information technology (IT), politics and law are determined by a test. Transferred to interview processes that achieve a result above the set minimum score.

The final stage is the interview process, and this stage is crucial. A commission will be set up to conduct the interview and the commission will assess the participants' skills. The candidate who scores the highest in the interview process will fill the announced vacancy.

Initially, in mid-2020, the Civil Service Development The Agency for Public Service Development announced an open competition for vacancies in its regional branches [25], but the scale of the organization of this practice has expanded throughout the year.

By the end of 2020, 220 most deserving candidates were admitted to the civil service through open competitions. It should be noted that 39 of them are graduates of higher education institutions in 2019 and 2020, which is a practical manifestation of the involvement of young professionals in the civil service [26].

As stated in the Presidential Decree, the scope of organizations that will hold open competitions in 2021 has been further expanded. As of October 2021, 13,484 government organizations are connected to a single open portal for vacancies of civil servants. 216,766 candidates have participated in open competitions announced through the portal to date. 3,647 people were recruited to the civil service on the basis of open competitions. These numbers have multiplied almost ten times from October 2021 to now. As of June 2022, 881 817 candidates have participated in open competitions announced through the portal to date. 34 255 people were recruited to the civil service on the basis of open competitions [27]. It should be noted that open competitions based on the principle of meritocracy serve to fill public institutions with the most qualified personnel.

The principle of meritocracy is used not only in the recruitment of personnel to the civil service on the basis of open competition, but also in the formation of reserve personnel for the civil service. In April of this year, as a pilot project, a club of 50 young people "Leaders of the Future" was established under the Samarkand regional branch of the Agency for Civil Service Development [28]. Speaking at the Youth Day ceremony, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that the most talented young people would be selected and "Leaders of the Future" clubs would be established [29]. After that, "Leaders of the Future" clubs were established in each region. For this purpose, in July and August 2021, 4-stage competitions were held. A total of 6,246 candidates applied for club membership. 2796 candidates passed the qualification requirements and participated in the test phase. On the basis of interviews with 50 candidates from each region (40 in Tashkent and Syrdarya regions), the most suitable candidates were recommended to the "Leaders of the Future" clubs. Thus, the "Leaders of the Future" clubs

were established in 12 regions of the country, the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the city of Tashkent, and these clubs consisted of a total of 680 young people. The main goal of the clubs is to form a new generation of qualified personnel for the civil service, to attract young people, especially young women, to the civil service and to form a reserve of management personnel from young promising personnel [30].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the recruitment of personnel to the civil service on the basis of open competitions, which is inherent in the principle of meritocracy, serves to create equal opportunities for citizens on the basis of democratic principles, as well as to provide the civil service with qualified personnel. In our opinion, now it is necessary to form a regulatory framework for open competitions. It is time to adopt a normative legal document entitled "Regulations on admission to the civil service on the basis of open competition." The reason is that the elections held throughout the country must have their own legal documents. This will make it easier for citizens to learn all aspects of the competition, in particular, the scope and conditions of the competition.

Also, the procedures for the formation of a reserve of civil servants, such as the Club of Leaders of the Future, should be based on certain regulations, ie regulated by the Regulations, such as the Republican contest "Development".

In addition, it is desirable that the composition of the selection commissions of open competitions should include employees of scientific and educational institutions, as well as members of the public. This will reduce the likelihood of corruption and conflicts of interest in employment, and will ensure a more fair selection process.

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