

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS ADHERING TO ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

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Annotation:

This article explores the critical role of public officials adhering to ethical principles in the fight against corruption. It highlights how the ethical conduct of government employees serves as a foundation for promoting transparency, accountability, and justice within public institutions. The piece discusses the importance of moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and fairness in reducing corrupt practices. Additionally, it examines the role of leadership, public service ethics, and institutional frameworks in fostering a culture of integrity. By adhering to these ethical principles, public officials can play a significant part in restoring public trust and contributing to effective governance. The article also explores practical recommendations for enhancing ethical behavior within government structures to effectively combat corruption.

Keywords: public officials, ethical principles, corruption, transparency, accountability, governance, integrity, leadership, public service ethics, moral values

Today, this issue is of great significance for Uzbekistan, which has chosen the path of independent development. In this regard, during the years of independence, the state governing bodies were radically reformed. The principles of democracy and market economy found expression in the essence of these reforms and were reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Specifically, the principle that "State power in the Republic of Uzbekistan is exercised solely by the bodies authorized by the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the laws adopted on its basis, aiming to serve the interests of the people"[1] is being ensured through the establishment of responsibility and accountability in the activities of state officials, citizens participation in state governance, and the expansion of the foundations of civil society.

Reforming the mindset of civil servants is a two-way process. On one hand, it requires the development of qualities specific to the new, modern civil servants, shaped on a special scientific basis. On the other hand, it demands the elimination of the corporative-bureaucratic psychology that still exerts influence, which was tested in the former Soviet cadre policies. These two processes must be carried out in parallel. Otherwise, the new, healthy mindset might collide with and retreat in the face of the old, proven mindset. For example, if the principle that the state's interest should be seen as one's own is acknowledged as the leading principle

of a civil servant's activity, but corruption, bribery, administrative commandism, and nepotism persist in governance without being tackled, such a situation may occur. It is known that unions built upon personal interests and the dominance of selfishness are powerful. This is because the dominance of personal interests unites selfish, exploitative, manipulative, and incompetent individuals who have infiltrated state bodies. In the former Soviet system, the principle of this unity was personal loyalty, manifested in 'I owe you, you owe me, and let the state be disregarded.' The individual became alienated from the state, and the state became alienated from the individual, distancing both from the fruits of their own labor. Therefore, the harmful legacy of the former Soviet system, where personal, group, local, and kinship interests were placed above the state's interests, still occasionally makes itself known, despite being harshly criticized.

When discussing the prevention of corruption among civil servants and the formation of anti-corruption behavior, it refers to the deep understanding of professional duty, loyalty to the profession, patriotism, honesty, fairness in work, strengthening willpower, regularly enhancing legal awareness and legal culture, refraining from actions that contradict society, fostering selflessness, patience, gratitude, and forming an uncompromising attitude towards corrupt practices.

The problems related to civil servants' deep understanding of professional duty, loyalty to the profession and service oath, patriotism, honesty, fairness in work, strengthening willpower, regularly enhancing legal awareness and legal culture, refraining from actions that contradict society, fostering selflessness, patience, gratitude, and an uncompromising stance towards corrupt practices, their solutions, and the social relationships involved in this process are studied.

The main tasks of moral education are as follows:

To educate civil servants to be loyal to the homeland and high moral ideas in any difficult and dangerous situation, to serve the people sincerely, and to foster humanitarianism, fairness, legality, public service, national pride, and the preservation of dignity.

To educate civil servants who are morally clean, truthful, steadfast, proactive, responsible, and independent thinkers.

To create a generation of civil servants who are brave, courageous, entrepreneurial, and would never even think of prioritizing personal interests over the interests of society.

To develop civil servants who possess a high level of ethical-legal culture and have mastered the secrets of professional culture.

To educate civil servants with a high level of professional knowledge who deeply feel their ethical professional duty and to nurture a new generation of specialists who can be proud of their heroism, humanity, humanitarianism, and courtesy.

The state and its institutions, as a political force that unites society around itself, affect social life as the core, shaping the necessary values, social norms, and moral imperatives through

supporting the creative and political initiatives of the population.

The highest organs of the state are obligated to obey the laws and regulatory legal documents they have developed and adopted, which is not only their constitutional legal duty but also a model and program of action for the middle and lower levels of government to follow. Failure to comply with this program by the higher state organs forms a negative attitude towards them among the people.

Therefore, the arbitrariness of high-ranking officials, their submission to autocracy, greed, and corruption, and their violation of the principles of justice, cost the state and the people dearly. It leads to the cult of personality, stifles free thought, and exacerbates social stratification, heightening antagonism between social classes.

In particular, as in all areas, preventing corruption primarily requires increasing the effectiveness of legal propaganda, carrying out moral-educational and informational-analytical work. This is because, through informational-analytical activities, it is possible to obtain necessary information about the overall situation, scale, structure, and dynamics of all violations of law, including corrupt practices, committed by young people.

In the state administration apparatus, the moral corruption of officials not only refers to the illegal enrichment of these officials but also other negative phenomena from the perspective of ethics and law, such as nepotism, cronyism (protectionism), and the corrupt connections that undermine the integrity of the official. Of the above-mentioned phenomena, the most common is cronyism and nepotism.[2]

Clientelism in service refers to the formation of the personnel composition based not on business qualities but on the basis of personal connections, aimed at fulfilling one's own interests.

The danger of corruption in the state apparatus services is evidenced by the following: according to the opinions of participants in the research, in the structured list of 15 personal and business qualities necessary to successfully perform service duties and advance in the career ladder, honesty and truthfulness ranked 3rd, perseverance 6th, incorruptibility 9th, and respect for citizens' rights and freedoms ranked 14th, just before the last. This distribution of social values aligns with the "expectations" of the organization. According to officials responsible for working with personnel, 66.7% of the respondents in state structures surveyed cited honesty, 57.1% mentioned principledness (perseverance), 52.4% referred to incorruptibility, and less than 5% mentioned respect for human rights and freedoms as the criteria for selecting personnel for public service.[3]

Considering the urgent need to understand the psychology and axiological (ethical) qualities of modern officials, experts have suggested developing anti-corruption measures. Corruption in the administrative apparatus is a flaw in the organizational system that leads to the abuse of power by the staff. These system flaws give rise to corrupt individuals, and officials who have sold their conscience shape the image of the system and create conditions for its inefficient

functioning. Officials are responsible for creating an environment that allows the use of the bureaucratic machine's flaws solely for personal benefit.

The demand for leaders in public service to manage power and serve as examples through ethical behavior is directly linked to the values of our ancient statehood culture. Indeed, the people's welfare and justice of the leader have always determined the future and development of the state. In this regard, our ancestor Muhammad Qozi said: "He (the leader) should know that the position of the ruler and the government is a means through which eternal happiness and a good name can be achieved. The rulers and governors of this world, proud of the transient and unfaithful state, destroy their religion for their own desires, and through their immorality, they cast faith to the wind".[4]

In regulating relations related to the ethics of governance and leadership, the importance of the administrative methods that meet the demands of the time and the legal foundations of the ethical-professional potential of personnel, as established by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 62 dated March 2, 2016, titled "Model Code of Conduct for Employees of State Administrative Bodies and Local Executive Authorities",[5] is significant. The main purpose of these regulations is to define unified principles and rules of conduct for employees of state administrative bodies and local executive authorities, to create conditions for them to conscientiously and efficiently carry out their duties, and to prevent abuses in public service.

Introducing these rules to state employees and ensuring their adherence will, first, encourage greater responsibility in their work, and second, demonstrate that they serve as a unified approach to developing high moral and ethical qualities in employees' interactions. One of the key aspects of the issue is that adherence to these rules by state employees serves as one of the criteria for evaluating their professional activity and behavior in service.

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