

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Improving the Institutional Foundations for Enhancing Human Dignity on The Basis of Trade Unions

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Abstract

This article analyses, from a socio-philosophical perspective, the issues of improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity on the basis of trade unions. It highlights the role of labour rights, decent working conditions, social protection, occupational safety, fair labour relations and social partnership mechanisms in ensuring human dignity. The article reveals the institutional capacity of trade unions to protect the rights and interests of employees, to develop social dialogue between employers and employees, and to secure the socio-economic interests of working people through collective agreements and accords. It also substantiates approaches aimed at increasing the effectiveness of efforts to enhance human dignity by improving the legal, organisational and social mechanisms of trade union activity. Particular attention is paid to the harmony between human dignity and the principles of decent work, to the role of trade unions as civil society institutions, and to their importance in ensuring social justice in modern labour relations.

KEY WORDS

Human dignity, trade unions, institutional foundations, social philosophy, labour rights, decent work, social protection, social partnership, labour relations, collective agreement, employee interests, social justice, civil society, occupational safety, institutional mechanisms.

INTRODUCTION

In the consistent reforms carried out under the leadership of the Head of our State, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, satisfying the needs of the people and enhancing human dignity are regarded first and foremost as the main idea.

One of the most important aspects that underlies and is reflected in the concept of New Uzbekistan is that the main goal of the reforms being implemented in our country is directed towards the individual, his life, rights and freedoms, dignity, needs and interests.

The investment attractiveness of our country is growing through the creation of new jobs, the development of free

competition in all sectors and the assurance of the rule of law.

Improving the Institutional Foundations for Enhancing Human Dignity on the Basis of Trade Unions

In any democratic society, trade unions act as an important social institution in ensuring citizens' labour rights, social guarantees and human dignity. In modern social relations, the enhancement of human dignity has become not only a philosophical issue but also one of the main criteria for the activity of legal, economic and social institutions. From this point of view, ensuring and enhancing human dignity is of particular importance in the activities of trade unions as well.

In a broad sense, the concept of human dignity refers to the rights and freedoms of the individual, his working conditions, his participation in social life and his value as a human being. Enhancing human dignity in the development of society cannot be achieved without institutional foundations. Among these foundations, the trade union system occupies an important place, because trade unions serve as a bridge between the state and society, ensure the social protection of citizens and express their interests.

In recent years, enhancing human dignity and giving priority to human interests have been elevated to the level of state policy in Uzbekistan as well. The motto put forward by President Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, "Enhancing human dignity is the main idea of building New Uzbekistan", serves as the central direction of this process. At the same time, great attention is being paid to the institution of trade unions in the life of the state and society.

The activities of trade unions cover several main directions of enhancing human dignity. First, protecting the rights of working people and ensuring justice in labour relations. Second, putting the principles of social justice into practice and creating conditions for citizens to lead a decent life. Third, strengthening human dignity by developing human capital, raising knowledge and qualifications, and supporting a healthy lifestyle.

In today's context of globalisation, the tasks assigned to trade unions are becoming increasingly complex. That is, they should not be limited to protecting labour rights, but must also deal with issues such as ensuring social stability, preventing unemployment, forming competitive human capital in the labour market, and preserving and developing human dignity in the era of modern technologies.

In this respect, when improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity, particular attention should be paid to the following directions in the trade union system:

- further improving the legal framework;
- expanding social partnership;
- modernising the organisational structure of trade unions;
- strengthening the mechanisms for protecting human rights and freedoms;
- taking an active part in developing staff potential and human capital.

It should be emphasised that the activities of trade unions should be viewed not only as a means of solving problems at workplaces but, in a broad sense, as an important factor in enhancing human dignity in the development of society. Human dignity is manifested first of all in labour relations, working conditions and fair wages. If a person receives decent pay for his work, if his rights are protected and if he has equal access to social services, then human dignity can be seen to be ensured in practice.

In the process of improving the institutional foundations of trade unions for enhancing human dignity, the legislative framework is of particular importance, since without legal guarantees the assurance of human dignity may remain at the level of a theoretical slogan. In this sense, extensive reforms are being carried out in Uzbekistan to improve labour legislation and to provide legal support for the activities of trade unions. The new version of the Labour Code, the Law "On Trade Unions" and various regulatory legal acts are expanding the institutional capacity of trade unions to enhance human dignity.

Another important direction of improving the legal foundations is the harmonisation of legislation with international standards. In particular, the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), international human rights instruments and various social agreements serve as important criteria for ensuring human dignity in the activities of trade unions. This enables trade unions to operate on the basis of global experience.

The institution of social partnership also plays an important role in enhancing human dignity. By further strengthening the system of cooperation between the state, employers and trade unions, new mechanisms for protecting human dignity are developed. For example, when employment contracts, collective agreements and social protection programmes are developed within the framework of social partnership and applied in practice, the conditions necessary for human dignity are ensured.

Modernising the organisational structure of trade unions is also one of the important tasks. The demands of today are such that unions in their classical form may not be sufficiently effective. Therefore, trade unions are required to introduce modern management methods, use digital technologies and communicate effectively with their members through online platforms. This makes it possible to employ modern, prompt and effective mechanisms for protecting human dignity.

Strengthening the mechanisms for protecting human rights and freedoms is an important direction of trade union activity. If a person's rights are violated, his dignity is also considered to be degraded. From this point of view, trade unions are entrusted with the task of eliminating violations at workplaces, protecting the legitimate interests of workers and securing justice for them through the judicial system. In this process, human dignity appears to be closely linked with the concept of "social justice".

The development of human capital is also one of the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity. Trade unions should not confine themselves to wages or working conditions; they also need to pay attention to raising employees' qualifications and knowledge, enhancing their intellectual potential and supporting a healthy lifestyle. In this direction, trade unions can implement various training courses, professional development programmes, health improvement activities and cultural and educational projects.

Trade unions should also contribute to ensuring the principles of social equality and gender justice in enhancing human dignity. The participation of women in the labour market, the realisation of young people's potential and the protection of the labour rights of persons with disabilities are all decisive factors in enhancing human dignity.

The institutional improvement of trade union activity is important not only at the national but also at the international level. In today's global economy, issues such as the mobility of labour resources, migration processes and the impact of new technologies on the labour market require new approaches to ensuring human dignity. In this regard, trade unions need to cooperate and exchange experience on the international stage and to rely on universal human criteria in protecting human dignity.

There are also a number of problems on the way to improving the institutional foundations of trade unions for enhancing human dignity. First of all, the level of influence of trade unions in social life remains limited in some cases. Insufficient attention to trade union activity on the part of some employers and incomplete exercise of the powers granted to trade unions by law weaken the possibilities for protecting human dignity.

The legal culture and civic activity of trade union members are not at a sufficient level. If employees do not know their rights well or are passive in protecting them, employers or various interested parties may take advantage of this situation. This

becomes an obstacle to preserving and enhancing human dignity. From this point of view, trade unions are entrusted with the task of raising legal culture, providing members with legal knowledge and encouraging their social activity.

Material resources and organisational capacity also affect the effectiveness of trade unions. In many cases their financial capacity is limited, which hinders the implementation of large-scale programmes aimed at enhancing human dignity. For example, organising professional development courses, health centres and cultural and educational events for employees requires substantial resources. Therefore, trade unions need to find additional financial sources in cooperation with the state, non-governmental organisations and international institutions.

Another important problem is insufficient adaptation to digital transformation processes. In the twenty-first century, labour relations are changing rapidly, and jobs, working conditions and types of work are becoming more diverse. New forms such as remote work, freelancing and online labour services are emerging. However, trade unions often remain confined to traditional workplaces. This may lead to ineffectiveness in new areas of ensuring human dignity. Therefore, trade unions must carry out institutional reforms that correspond to the digital economy and new forms of work.

Another serious obstacle to enhancing human dignity is bureaucratic barriers and, in some cases, corruption. If trade union activity becomes a formality and remains only on paper, its true purpose, the protection of human dignity, will not be achieved. That is why ensuring the transparency and accountability of unions is very important. Every member should know what work his organisation is carrying out, what funds are being spent in which areas and what results this produces.

As a solution, democratic governance in trade unions can be strengthened. That is, taking into account the opinions of members, involving them in decision-making and ensuring the accountability and responsibility of leaders are important tasks. As a result, trade unions will become institutions that genuinely express the interests of citizens.

Organising research work is also important in the process of enhancing human dignity, because human dignity is not merely a theoretical concept but a multifaceted problem connected with the real situation in society. If scientific analysis identifies the problems of workers in various sectors,

their working and living conditions and their opportunities for social protection, trade unions can develop targeted programmes on this basis.

Using international experience is also very important in eliminating problems in trade union activity. In various countries of the world, trade unions have developed effective mechanisms for protecting human dignity. For example, in the Scandinavian countries the system of social partnership is highly developed and serves as the most important factor in ensuring human dignity. In countries such as Germany, France and Japan, trade unions are also implementing large-scale social programmes in cooperation with the state and employers. Studying these experiences and adapting them to national conditions will be an important step in enhancing human dignity.

Improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity requires the implementation of a number of practical tasks in the trade union system. First of all, it is necessary to further deepen legal reforms in the field of labour relations. For this purpose, it is important to clearly regulate relations between employers and workers in legislation, to provide reliable protection for employment contracts and to strengthen mechanisms for the prompt resolution of labour disputes. In addition, the practical assurance of human dignity can be achieved through the wide introduction of the institution of collective agreements.

The role of the state in developing the system of social partnership is important. The state should create legal and organisational foundations that encourage dialogue between trade unions and employers. For example, systemic mechanisms for protecting human dignity can be established through social advisory councils, labour dispute resolution commissions and specialised state bodies. If in this process the state acts not as an "authority" but on the basis of "patronage and partnership", the influence of trade unions will also increase.

Digital platforms are of great importance in the process of modernising trade unions. Today, in many countries of the world, trade unions communicate with their members through mobile applications, online portals and social networks. This not only saves time and resources but also ensures transparency in the process of protecting human dignity. In Uzbekistan, too, trade unions can introduce digital services and create opportunities to receive workers' appeals online and to resolve labour disputes electronically.

In the field of human capital development, trade unions should be more actively involved in education and professional development. For example, in cooperation with vocational centres, they can organise retraining courses for workers and help them master modern technologies in various sectors. In this way, competitive human capital is formed in the labour market, which in turn contributes to the enhancement of human dignity.

Trade unions should also take the initiative in supporting a healthy lifestyle and social protection. For example, organising health centres, recreation camps, sports competitions and cultural and educational events for workers is a practical expression of enhancing human dignity. Human dignity is also protected in practice by assisting low-income families and persons with disabilities and by ensuring social justice.

Special attention should be paid to gender equality and youth issues. Protecting women's rights in the labour market, expanding their participation in leadership positions, providing employment for young people and realising their potential should be among the priority areas of trade union activity, because human dignity cannot be fully ensured without the principles of equality and justice.

Trade unions need to expand international cooperation and apply global experience to national conditions. For example, joint projects aimed at enhancing human dignity can be implemented in cooperation with the International Labour Organization and various regional trade unions. This makes it possible not only to exchange experience but also to introduce mechanisms for ensuring human dignity on the basis of international standards.

In order to increase the influence and effectiveness of trade unions, their organisational capacity should also be strengthened. For this, it is important to train personnel with modern leadership qualities, legal knowledge and management skills. By involving young people in trade union activities and supporting their initiatives, the active participation of the new generation in protecting human dignity will be ensured.

Finally, the improvement of the institutional foundations of trade unions for enhancing human dignity must be carried out in harmony with state policy, because the issue of human dignity is not the task of a single institution but the common goal of the entire society. Human dignity can be truly enhanced only through cooperation between the state, civil

society institutions, non-governmental organisations and citizens.

Improving the institutional foundations of trade unions for enhancing human dignity is a continuous process that includes not only legislative or organisational changes but also reforms in social consciousness and culture. Human dignity is determined not only by laws or material conditions but is also measured by how a person feels in society, how much he is valued and how many opportunities he has.

From a philosophical point of view, human dignity is a concept related to the priceless value of a human being as such, to his freedom, honour and inviolability. The more a society values human dignity, the more stable its development will be. Therefore, trade unions should act not only as bodies protecting labour rights but also as guardians and defenders who ensure human dignity in practical life.

From the standpoint of strategic prospects, the following directions will be of priority importance in the institutional development of trade unions in the future:

- 1. Deepening legal reforms:** harmonising legislation with international standards and introducing effective mechanisms for protecting the labour rights of workers and employees.
- 2. Strengthening digital transformation:** introducing online appeal platforms, electronic collective agreements and digital legal protection services.
- 3. Expanding social partnership:** strengthening tripartite cooperation between the state, employers and trade unions and reinforcing social agreements in ensuring human dignity.
- 4. Developing human capital:** enhancing human dignity through professional development programmes, retraining courses and support for a healthy lifestyle.
- 5. Ensuring the active participation of young people and women:** training a new generation of leaders in trade unions and putting the principles of equality and justice into practice.
- 6. Transparency and accountability:** ensuring openness in trade union activity, taking members' opinions into account and giving priority to their interests.
- 7. International cooperation:** adapting global experience to national conditions and introducing international

standards in protecting human dignity.

Reforms carried out on the basis of these directions will not only protect the rights of workers and employees but will also serve to enhance human dignity in society as a whole. Where human dignity is elevated, social justice is established, citizens' trust in the state and society grows, and social stability is ensured.

Improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity on the basis of trade unions is one of the most important conditions for the development of modern society. The state, civil society institutions, employers and, above all, citizens themselves must take an active part in this process, because human dignity is a universal value, and its assurance is closely connected with the life and destiny of every individual.

In the conditions of New Uzbekistan, trade unions should act not merely as a sectoral institution but as a nationwide mechanism for enhancing human dignity. Only then will it be possible to build a democratic, just and sustainable society.

The issue of improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity on the basis of trade unions is of strategic importance for the development of modern society. As long as human dignity and fair treatment of a person's work are not placed at the centre of reforms, it is impossible to ensure justice, stability and social progress in society. In this sense, trade unions act not only as organisations protecting the rights of working people but also as one of the important institutional mechanisms for enhancing human dignity and achieving social justice and equality. Improving the institutional foundations means, above all, strengthening the activities of trade unions in legislative, organisational and structural, financial, social and spiritual directions.

In the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan, the issue of human dignity is defined as the main goal, and the human factor is being put first in all spheres, including labour relations. This, in turn, places new tasks on trade unions. First of all, to enhance human dignity, working people must have decent working conditions, receive fair pay for their work, enjoy social guarantees and have their spiritual and moral needs satisfied. It is in performing these tasks that trade unions serve as a bridge between the state, employers and society.

One of the important directions of improving the institutional foundations is bringing the legal framework and regulatory

legal acts into line with the requirements of the time. The Labour Code, the Law on Trade Unions and the acts regulating social partnership and labour relations should deeply reflect the idea of enhancing human dignity. In particular, it is necessary to strengthen the participation of trade unions in matters such as working hours and rest time, labour protection, workplace safety, health improvement activities and social insurance. At the same time, trade unions should expand their institutional functions in new forms of work, such as remote work, freelancing and labour relations in the digital economy.

The second important direction is organisational and structural reform. It is advisable for trade unions to use modern management and governance methods in their activities and to establish additional commissions, advisory councils and monitoring centres to protect the rights and interests of their members effectively. For example, if a digital platform for the prompt detection of labour rights violations and centres for the prompt resolution of workplace problems are established, the institutional foundations for protecting human dignity will be further strengthened.

The third aspect is financial independence and sustainability. To enhance human dignity, trade unions need to have their own economic resources, because a financially weak organisation cannot operate independently of employers or state bodies. For this reason, trade unions need to diversify their financial sources, manage the income generated by their activities transparently and attract funds for social projects.

The fourth important direction is the development of social partnership and dialogue. To enhance human dignity, an effective system of dialogue must be formed between the state, trade unions and employers. Labour agreements, social cooperation agreements and collective bargaining serve as the main institutional mechanisms for ensuring human dignity. If trade unions participate actively in these processes, their role in enhancing human dignity will grow further.

The fifth aspect is strengthening spiritual, educational and information activities. Human dignity is determined not only by material interests but is also closely connected with a person's spiritual world, legal knowledge and civic culture. From this point of view, legal literacy courses, psychological support programmes, the creation of information resources for trade union members and cooperation with the mass media are important tasks.

Improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity on the basis of trade unions is a comprehensive process that covers the legal, organisational, financial and spiritual spheres. As an important institution of modern society, trade unions should not be limited to protecting the rights of working people; they should become initiators and implementers of comprehensive socio-economic reforms aimed at enhancing human dignity. In this way, they will take an important place in the development of New Uzbekistan and create a modern institutional foundation for enhancing human dignity.

The issue of improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity on the basis of trade unions should be considered not only within the sphere of labour relations but also as one of the priority directions of the development of society as a whole. The concept of human dignity occupies a central place in all spheres, especially in socio-economic relations. The stability and development of any state are determined by ensuring human rights and freedoms and by raising the standing of the individual in work and social life.

Human dignity and the dignity of labour are closely interrelated concepts. If decent conditions are not created for a person's work, if fair pay is not provided and if the social protection system is not strong, it is difficult to speak of human dignity in the full sense. From this point of view, trade unions are one of the main institutional mechanisms for enhancing human dignity. They perform the tasks of protecting the interests of workers and employees before the state and employers, ensuring social justice and creating decent working conditions for all.

As an institution, trade unions occupy a special place in the system of public administration. They represent the organisational strength of the working community and make it possible to convey the collective will to the state and employers. On this basis, it can be said that the role of trade unions in improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity is not auxiliary but decisive.

First of all, institutional improvement is inseparably linked with the legal framework. In Uzbekistan, a number of laws regulating labour relations, in particular the Labour Code, the Law "On Trade Unions", the Law "On Social Partnership" and other regulatory acts, should be based on the issue of human dignity. In the course of new reforms, it is necessary to bring legislation into line with modern requirements, harmonise it with international norms and introduce provisions that

strongly protect the rights of workers and employees.

In particular, the full integration of the conventions of the International Labour Organization into national legislation will strengthen the institutional foundations of trade unions. This process will reinforce legal guarantees in ensuring human dignity and ensure justice in labour relations. It is also important that trade union staff and leaders possess legal knowledge and are able to protect the interests of their members competently.

The second aspect is the improvement of organisational structures. Trade unions should use modern management, governance and communication methods in their activities. In today's context of globalisation and the digital economy, limiting activity to traditional forms does not make it possible to fully accomplish the tasks of enhancing human dignity. Therefore, trade unions need to create digital platforms, establish a system of online communication with members, conduct precise monitoring at workplaces and strengthen collective oversight.

For example, a single electronic portal could be set up to receive complaints and proposals from workers and employees. Through this system, every worker would be able to report his problem promptly, and the trade union would be able to raise the problem before the employer or state bodies. In this way, one of the important institutional guarantees of human dignity, a system of fair dialogue and accountability, is ensured.

The third aspect is financial independence and transparency. Trade unions need to be financially independent in their activities and to manage effectively the membership fees collected from their members and other sources of income. A trade union that is not financially strong becomes dependent on the employer or the state, which limits its ability to protect human dignity. Therefore, trade unions must diversify their financial system and earn income from various socio-economic projects, while ensuring transparency and accountability in this process.

The fourth aspect is improving social partnership mechanisms. The system of social cooperation between the state, employers and trade unions is the main institutional mechanism for ensuring human dignity. The interests of workers and employees are protected through collective agreements, accords and negotiations. If trade unions participate actively in these processes, the lives and working

conditions of working people will improve qualitatively.

The fifth aspect is spiritual and educational activity. Human dignity is not limited to material interests; a person's spiritual and moral world is also very important. Therefore, trade unions should carry out large-scale work to raise employees' legal literacy, provide spiritual and moral education and strengthen social activity. In this process, the active use of information technologies, the mass media and social networks is of great importance.

Socio-philosophical criteria are also important in the process of improving the institutional foundations for enhancing human dignity on the basis of trade unions, since the concept of human dignity has social, spiritual and cultural foundations in a broad sense, not only legal or economic ones. Ensuring human dignity means guaranteeing a person's individual freedoms, social standing, spiritual world and active participation in social processes. From this perspective, trade unions perform the following tasks in enhancing human dignity:

1. Enhancing the dignity of the individual in the labour process. This includes ensuring safety and health at the workplace, creating fair working conditions and providing opportunities for workers and employees to develop their qualifications and skills.

2. Increasing the individual's activity in social life. Human dignity is manifested through a person's participation in civil society institutions, including trade unions. Therefore, trade unions should involve people in social processes and foster an active civic position in them.

3. Supporting the spiritual and cultural development of the individual. Human dignity also needs to be enhanced in the spiritual sense. In this area, trade unions can meet the spiritual needs of their members by organising various educational events, cultural meetings, and sports and health programmes.

As an institution, trade unions are also an important factor in ensuring social stability and equality in society. If human dignity is neglected, this may lead to injustice in labour relations, violations of workers' rights and growing social inequality, which in turn adversely affects stability in society. Therefore, by ensuring human dignity, trade unions strengthen social stability.

From a practical point of view, trade unions can use various

instruments to enhance human dignity:

- **The system of collective agreements.** Through this system, the rights and obligations of workers and employees, the responsibility of the employer, working conditions and social guarantees are clearly defined. The collective agreement is one of the main instruments for ensuring human dignity.
- **Negotiations and social partnership.** The interests of working people are protected in the course of dialogue between the state, employers and trade unions. If this process is organised effectively, the legal and economic guarantees of human dignity are strengthened.
- **Labour protection and a healthy working environment.** Human dignity is also inseparably linked with a person's health. Therefore, trade unions should ensure compliance with labour protection rules, monitor workplace safety and implement health improvement programmes for employees.
- **Use of digital platforms.** Today, trade unions can use information technologies effectively to protect human dignity. For example, receiving workers' complaints online, identifying and monitoring labour rights violations interactively and maintaining databases further increase the possibilities for ensuring human dignity.
- **International cooperation.** Through cooperation with international organisations, trade unions gain important experience and resources for enhancing human dignity. For example, introducing the standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and studying and applying the experience of trade unions in foreign countries to national practice are of great importance.

In the process of enhancing human dignity, the improvement of the institutional foundations of trade unions includes not only economic or legal reforms but also, in a broad sense, social, spiritual and cultural reforms.

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