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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Formation and Development of Non-State Preschool Educational Institutions in The Jizzakh Region

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Abstract

This article highlights the formation and development stages of public-private partnerships (PPP) and family preschool educational organizations in non-state preschool educational institutions (NPSE) in the Jizzakh region of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The study examines the role of the non-state education sector in the process of increasing preschool education coverage in the Jizzakh region from 27% to 79% between 2017 and 2025, the effectiveness of Presidential Decrees No. PP-3651 and No. PP-3955, and the mechanisms of preferential loans and subsidies.

KEYWORDS

Public-private partnership, family preschool education, private preschool education, educational coverage, inclusive education, "Imkon".

INTRODUCTION

The preschool education system is an important and integral part of continuous education that ensures the development of society. The socio-economic problems that arose at the initial stage of independence also had an impact on the preschool education system. In some regions, there was a reduction in the number of preschool educational institutions, problems with material and technical support, a shortage of qualified personnel and a decrease in the level of enrollment of children. This situation necessitated the development of non-state forms of preschool education alongside existing state preschool educational institutions. Since 2017, the fundamental reform of the preschool education sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan has become a priority of state policy. In particular, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, noted that "today, the enrollment of children in preschool educational institutions stands at 27%, and we have neglected work in this important field; we face complex tasks regarding the upbringing of youth, increasing enrollment levels, and training and retraining personnel in psychology and various other fields" [1]. It was impossible to solve these problems in a short time only at the expense of state kindergartens. Therefore, the accelerated development and stimulation of the network of non-state preschool educational institutions, public-private partnerships (PPP), and family kindergartens has been identified as a strategic task.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to increase the enrollment of preschool children in preschool educational institutions, the activities of non-state preschool educational institutions are enshrined in the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to create and develop a network of non-state preschool educational organizations" [2], Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-3651 "On measures to further stimulate and develop the preschool education system" [3], Resolution No. PP-3955 "On measures to improve the management of the preschool education system" [4], and Resolution No. PP-5144 [5].

The history of the development of the preschool education system in the regions of Uzbekistan and the implementation of non-state educational models are theoretically analyzed in the studies of F. Shirinova and G. Norbutaeva [6]. On an international scale, the OECD's "Starting Strong" series of reports recognizes the role of the non-governmental sector in increasing the diversity and quality of services.

METHODOLOGY

In the course of the research, a systematic approach, historical-chronological, statistical, comparative-dynamic analysis, and territorial-geographical grouping methods were used. Additionally, a substantive analysis of regulatory legal acts concerning the formation and development of the non-state sector in the field of preschool education was conducted.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The formation of non-state preschool educational organizations in the Jizzakh region was directly linked to the reforms carried out in the republic. At the initial stage, that is, until 2017, preschool education services were mainly provided through state institutions. The participation of the non-state sector was limited, and its role in the regional education system was not significantly established. In 2017, there were only about 250 non-state preschool educational organizations operating in the republic; in subsequent years, as a result of the favorable legal environment created by the state, tax and credit incentives, and the introduction of public-private partnership mechanisms, their number has increased several times over. In particular, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, at a video-selector meeting dedicated to the preschool education system in 2017, emphasized the need to expand the network of non-state preschool educational institutions based on public-private partnerships and stated that "new types of preschool educational institutions will be actively created based on public-private partnerships" [7].

Specifically, while there were 754 non-state preschool educational institutions in 2018, there were 1,105 in 2019, 1,671 in 2020, 1,549 in 2021, and 1,826 in 2022. The total number of PPPs, including family kindergartens and private kindergartens, increased from 1,437 in 2018 to more than 7,500 in 2019, from 12,000 in 2020 to 18,548 in 2021 [8].

This is an unprecedented increase in a short period of time, with the number of non-state kindergartens exceeding the number of state kindergartens-for example, in 2021, there were 7,868 public kindergartens, while the number of private kindergartens exceeded 18,000 [8]. The creation of a significant portion of them in family non-state preschool educational organizations is explained by the provision of a number of organizational, financial, and economic incentives to business entities for the development of this direction.

Such institutions typically have a small capacity, designed for 30-40 children. This form has become an important factor in expanding preschool education services, especially in remote and hard-to-reach areas, and in reaching children in preschool educational institutions. As a result of these reforms, the enrollment rate in preschool education increased from 27 percent in 2017 to 63 percent in 2021. This shows the effectiveness of the work done in the field.

The introduction of the PPP mechanism led to a redistribution of functions between the public and private sectors in the preschool education system. At the same time, the primary tasks of the state are aimed at regulation, control, and support, while the private sector is tasked with creating infrastructure, investing, and organizing educational services.

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-3651 dated April 5, 2018, "On measures to further stimulate and develop the preschool education system", has legally strengthened the activities of PPPs and provided a number of opportunities. In particular, the provision of loans for a term of 15 years at an annual interest rate of 1% with a 3-year accumulation period, the sale of vacant state property objects, including buildings of non-functioning state preschool educational institutions at "zero" purchase value - at least 30 years, the provision of land for permanent use on a free basis for the construction of buildings, taxes for a period of 10 years, and customs duties on the import of equipment for 2 years [9]. Through this document, it was possible to stabilize the interests of the public and private sectors, increase the efficiency of the national economy, and regulate the activities of preschool educational organizations.

In accordance with the "Concept for the Development of the Preschool Education System until 2030" of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated May 8, 2019, No. PP-4312, it was determined to increase the number of non-state educational institutions based on public-private partnerships and increase their share to 75% [11].

In 2017, there was only one non-state preschool educational institution operating in the Jizzakh region[12]. This situation necessitated the development of the non-state sector in the

region and the effective use of existing infrastructure. Particular attention was paid to expanding the network of non-state preschool education in the region, introducing public-private partnership mechanisms, and attracting investment to the sector.

By 2019, significant changes had occurred in the network of preschool educational institutions in the Jizzakh region. A total of 242 preschool educational institutions operated in the region, of which 183 were state preschool educational institutions (PEO), 7 were institutions based on public-private partnerships (PPP), 2 were built in the Mirzachul district with a capacity of 220 people, 1 in the city of Jizzakh with a capacity of 120 people, 1 in the Zaamin district with a capacity of 100 people, 1 in the Zarbdor district with a capacity of 100 people, and 2 in the Sharaf Rashidov district with a capacity of 200 people. A total of 13 private kindergartens have been established in the region: 1 in the Pakhtakor district with a coverage of 50 children, 3 in the city of Jizzakh with a coverage of 150 children, 2 in the Zaamin district with a coverage of 100 children, 4 in the Sharof Rashidov district with a coverage of 200 children, 1 in the Gallaorol district with a coverage of 50 children, and 2 in the Dustlik district with a coverage of 100 children. On June 1, 2019, the non-governmental preschool educational organization "Yurtimiz Kamalagi" was commissioned on the basis of a public-private partnership. In the institution, 12 employees organize English, Russian, mental arithmetic and speech therapy clubs and teach children [13].

By 2020, the number of non-state preschool educational organizations in the region exceeded the number of state preschool educational organizations. There were a total of 725 preschool educational institutions in the region, 533 of which were non-state preschool educational organizations. There were 40 PPPs (3,840 coverage), 15 private (820 coverage), 478 family non-governmental (1,1950 coverage) kindergartens, from 7 PPPs in 2019 to 40 in 2020, that is, 33 PPPs were created. 1 (100 people) in Yangiabad, 3 (270 people) in Pakhtakor, 1 (75 people) in Zafarabad, 4 (530 people) in Jizzakh, 3 (255 people) in Farish district, 7 (920 people) in Sharaf Rashidov district, 4 (500 people) in Gallaorol, 1 (50 people) in Dustlik district, 4 (400 people) in Bakhmal district. There are 12 private kindergartens in Jizzakh (590 children), 2 in the Sharaf Rashidov district (130 children), and 1 in Gallaorol (100 children) [14]. It is also observed that some private preschool educational organizations established in 2019 have ceased their activities. This situation can be assessed from the perspective of issues related to the economic sustainability of organizing preschool education services.

Despite the fact that the increase in the number of non-state preschool educational organizations in the Jizzakh region is a positive result, there are some problems in their activities. First of all, there may be an uneven distribution of non-state educational services between cities and districts. While it is economically profitable to open private and family organizations in densely populated areas, establishing such activities in remote villages is more difficult for entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION

The formation and development of non-state preschool educational organizations in the Jizzakh region took place in close connection with the reform processes of the preschool education system in the republic. The expansion of the non-governmental sector has had a positive impact on children's enrollment in preschool education. However, alongside increasing coverage, it is necessary to address issues regarding the quality of education, the qualifications of teaching staff, methodological support, and social equality. For the further development of non-state preschool educational organizations in the Jizzakh region, it is advisable to expand public-private partnership projects based on regional needs, provide methodological support to family organizations, and create favorable conditions for children from families in need of social protection.

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