



UZBEKISTAN IN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FIELDS DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE AND ITS SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

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Abstract

This article analyzes one of the important stages in the development of physical education and the sports industry in Uzbekistan during the years of independence, focusing on the activities of the “Yoshlik” sports society. It examines government decisions and their implementation, which have led to increased participation in sports—particularly among youth and girls—and to notable international achievements. The study also explores the socio-spiritual role of this society in the lives of citizens.

Keywords: Physical education, sports policy, globalization, chess, healthy lifestyle, competition, international, public.

Introduction

In today’s globalized world, the protection of human health, the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, and the formation of well-being-oriented habits have become one of the priority directions in the social policies of many states. Since gaining independence, Uzbekistan has adopted a systematic and complex approach aimed at educating a healthy generation and increasing youth participation in sports and physical education.

Guided by the principle of “New Uzbekistan – Healthy Generation,” the President of the Republic has initiated wide-ranging reforms that provide strong motivation for the development of sports throughout the country.



During the years of independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has paid increasing attention to physical education and sports at the state level, leading to fundamental reforms in this sector. Since the early 2000s, promoting a healthy lifestyle through sports and directing all social groups—especially youth—toward physical and spiritual development has become one of the main priorities of state policy.

In this context, a significant resolution was adopted on September 27, 2004. Based on the Presidential Decree, the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established to promote physical education and the development of public sports [8].

The Decree, along with Resolution No. 455 of the Cabinet of Ministers, established a unified state policy and a centralized management mechanism in the field of sports and culture. As a result of these changes, regional sports departments were reorganized, their powers expanded, and the number and quality of sports federations significantly increased. In parallel, greater attention was given to national sports.

Particular emphasis was placed on promoting a healthy lifestyle among youth, supporting sports for children and women, and creating equal opportunities for people with disabilities and socially vulnerable groups. This marked the beginning of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to sports development in Uzbekistan.

Since 2004, the country has focused on the development of sports in four main directions: mass sports, children's sports, women's sports, and elite (high-performance) sports. These initiatives were implemented through systematic and state-supported measures aimed at expanding the reach of physical education and sports across the republic.

In 2008, the adoption of the Law “On the Guarantees of the Rights of the Child” and the declaration of the “Year of the Perfect Generation” further supported the development of youth sports. Based on this program, the legal and infrastructural foundations necessary for ensuring the physical and spiritual maturity of the younger generation through sports were significantly strengthened [10].



Methods and Materials

This article is based on generally accepted historical research methods, including the principles of historicity, comparative-logical analysis, chronological sequence, and objectivity. It analyzes the reforms implemented in the field of physical education and sports in Uzbekistan since 2004, focusing on their impact on the health, physical development, and promotion of a healthy lifestyle among young people. The main stages of state policy, relevant legal and regulatory documents, the current institutional framework, and the outcomes of these reforms have been examined using data from periodicals and archival sources.

The topic of reforms in physical education and sports in the Republic of Uzbekistan, and their influence on youth health, has been addressed in several scientific and practical studies. Notably, based on the decrees and resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, various researchers have systematically analyzed the state's policies aimed at improving the sports system, fostering a healthy lifestyle, and increasing youth participation in sports.

Significant contributions in this area have been made by specialists such as A. Normuradov and G. Morgunova, whose works shed light on the socio-economic and cultural aspects of sports development. Additionally, N. Tolipov, in his article, draws attention to the activities and achievements of members of the Uzbekistan Chess Federation.

Furthermore, analytical materials prepared by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Sports, and the Ministry of Public Education provide insight into the measures undertaken as part of the “Year of a Prosperous Generation” state program and their effects on the physical development of youth.

However, most existing studies are limited to specific timeframes or aspects of sports policy, and relatively few comprehensively assess the systemic impact of reforms on youth health and lifestyle. This article aims to address that gap by offering a deeper investigation into the social significance of post-2004 reforms, their role in the lives of young people, and the results achieved, based on a rigorous scientific approach.



Results and Discussion

In the years following independence, and especially since 2004, a number of practical measures have been undertaken in Uzbekistan to support physical education and sports and to promote a healthy lifestyle among the population, particularly the younger generation. To further develop sports in the republic, to nurture physically healthy and well-rounded individuals, and to improve the management and coordination of the culture and sports sectors, a landmark decision was made. On September 27, 2004, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 3491, “On the Organization of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan,” was promulgated [3.23.].

In accordance with this decree, the existing Ministry of Culture and the State Committee for Physical Education and Sports were dissolved, and in their place, the Ministry of Culture and Sports was established. The ministry’s primary functions include implementing a unified state policy in the field of culture and mass sports; organizing folk games, active games, and traditional sports competitions at the national level; promoting mass sports; and integrating national sports into the social life and lifestyle of both youth and the broader population. Developing sports and providing continuous support—alongside fostering a healthy lifestyle and instilling a love for sports—became central tasks. To summarize, in 2004, a total of 63 sports federations were active in Uzbekistan across Olympic, non-Olympic, and national sports categories [1.34.].

To ensure the practical implementation of this presidential decree and to enhance coordination in the field, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 455 on September 30, 2004, titled “On the Organization of the Activities of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan” [4.21.]. This resolution approved the model structure of the Ministry of Culture and Sports in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent city departments, as well as district-level departments. The total number of staff members allocated to territorial bodies of culture and sports was fixed at 448 [5.34.].

It should be emphasized that physical education and sports in Uzbekistan have been developed through four primary areas: mass sports, children’s sports, women’s sports, and elite (high-performance) sports. These directions have



played a crucial role in promoting a wide range of sports throughout the republic. The government has consistently focused on ensuring inclusive access to sports for children in need of social protection, persons with disabilities, orphans, and children without parental care. These efforts have been systematically implemented and remain ongoing.

A significant milestone in this regard was the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. O'RQ-139-N, "On Guarantees of the Rights of the Child," on January 7, 2008 [9.]. The law represents the government's continued commitment to embedding humanitarian principles into public life and forms part of broader state reforms aimed at safeguarding the rights and welfare of children.

In the following period, the policy of supporting and encouraging youth sports was further strengthened. The symbolic designation of the year 2010 as the "Year of the Perfect Generation," along with the development of a dedicated State Program, contributed significantly to the physical and spiritual growth of young people. It facilitated their acquisition of advanced intellectual knowledge and supported their development into well-rounded individuals. The program also placed strong emphasis on the healthy physical development of the younger generation.

The implementation of this initiative assigned substantial responsibilities to physical education institutions, especially those operating within higher and secondary specialized educational systems. In accordance with the tasks outlined in the State Program, the Ministry of Justice developed and implemented a range of targeted measures. Notably, more than 1,500 vocational colleges and academic lyceums across the country actively participated in promotional and educational campaigns, playing a leading role in the holistic development of young people [6.145.].

During this time, the Republic of Uzbekistan also intensified its focus on the development of chess, recognized globally as a prestigious intellectual sport. Throughout the years of independence, Uzbekistan hosted numerous high-profile tournaments, including the Grand Prix series of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), the Asian Youth Championship, the Central Asian Cup, and various other international competitions. The exceptional organization and high



competitive level of these events significantly enhanced Uzbekistan's reputation in the global chess community.

One remarkable milestone was achieved in 2013 when five-year-old Islambek Sindarov became the continental champion. Other notable chess players, such as Shamsiddin Vokhidov and Ortik Nigmatov, also earned titles as Asian schoolchildren's champions, further elevating Uzbekistan's status in the international chess arena.

The number of chess schools, clubs, and institutions expanded significantly due to the initiative of the Uzbekistan Chess Federation. For the first time, the national chess team of Uzbekistan participated in the World Chess Olympiad held in Manila, Philippines, where it achieved second place in the overall team standings—surpassing teams from the USA, England, Hungary, China, and Armenia [7.45.].

By 2014, membership in the Uzbekistan Chess Federation had surpassed 6,500. This figure included 16 international grandmasters, 25 international masters of sports, 16 FIDE masters, 123 Uzbek national masters of sports, 1,224 candidates for master of sports, and 3,500 first-class chess players. During this period, more than 63,000 citizens across the country were actively engaged in regular chess activities [2.].

Additionally, the regional branches of the Uzbekistan Chess Federation were established in Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Fergana, Andijan, Namangan, Bukhara, Syrdarya, Jizzakh, and the city of Tashkent. Summarizing some of the major achievements in chess: at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou (China), Rustam Kasimov won first place in the individual competition, while the Uzbek women's team secured second place overall.

In 2011, Nodirbek Abdusattorov won the gold medal in the Asian Championship among 7-year-old participants. At the 2012 World Chess Olympiad, Anton Filippov earned second place as part of the national team. That same year, Abdusattorov also became the world champion among children under the age of eight (Maribor, Slovenia) and was awarded the title of FIDE Master.

The Uzbek national chess team claimed first place in the Central Asian Cup three years in a row—in 2011, 2012, and 2013 [7.47.]. In individual events, Rustam



Kasymjanov (2011), Alexey Barsov (2012), and Jahongir Vokhidov (2013) each won the Central Asian Championship outright.

From October 20 to 29, 2017, the 24th Mikhail Chigorin Memorial International Chess Tournament was held in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The event drew 360 players from 20 countries. Members of Uzbekistan's youth and senior national teams—International Grandmaster Jahongir Vokhidov, International Masters Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Nodirbek Yakubboev, Shamsiddin Vokhidov, and Javokhir Sindarov—achieved outstanding results [7.48.]. In particular, in the blitz category, 15-year-old Nodirbek Yakubboev, a master of sports of international standing, secured first place among 300 participants from 24 countries.

Conclusion

Since 2004, Uzbekistan has implemented fundamental reforms in the field of physical education and sports. These changes, grounded in presidential decrees, led to the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, which has played a vital role in advancing mass sports and national sports development across the country.

Particular emphasis has been placed on the physical and spiritual well-being of the younger generation. Through systematic and targeted measures, the government has cultivated increased interest in sports among youth. Within this framework, inclusive opportunities have been created for children, women, and socially vulnerable groups, affirming the state's commitment to equality in sports participation.

The development of sports in Uzbekistan has been guided by four key directions: mass sports, children's sports, women's sports, and elite (high-performance) sports. These pillars have been reinforced through wide-ranging and comprehensive state policies.

Notably, Uzbekistan's achievements in chess have garnered global recognition. Talented young players such as Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Jahongir Vokhidov, and Shamsiddin Vokhidov have brought honor to the country through their victories in international competitions, raising the nation's prestige on the world stage.

In conclusion, the post-2004 era in Uzbekistan has witnessed the successful promotion of sports, the cultivation of a healthy and capable young generation,



and consistent accomplishments in international competitions. These outcomes reflect the effectiveness of a systematic state policy, which has laid a strong foundation for the sustainable development of the sports sector and enhanced Uzbekistan's international sports reputation.

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