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ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND POPULATION WELFARE STATUS OF SURKHANDARYA REGION

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Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic development indicators and population welfare in Surkhandarya Region. It examines the dynamics of gross regional product, investment, industrial and agricultural output, employment, income, and poverty, and develops recommendations for strengthening regional development and improving population welfare.

Keywords: socio-economic development, population welfare, gross regional product, investment, employment, income, service sector, industry, agriculture.

Аннотация. В статье представлен комплексный анализ показателей социально-экономического развития и благосостояния населения Сурхандарьинской области. Рассмотрена динамика валового регионального продукта, инвестиций, промышленного и сельскохозяйственного производства, занятости, доходов населения и уровня бедности, а также разработаны рекомендации по укреплению регионального развития и повышению благосостояния населения.

Ключевые слова: социально-экономическое развитие, благосостояние населения, валовой региональный продукт, инвестиции, занятость, доходы населения, сфера услуг, промышленность, сельское хозяйство.

INTRODUCTION

In enhancing the country's sustainable economic development and raising the population's standard of living, an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic situation of the regions is of great importance. Surkhandarya Region, located in the southern part of Uzbekistan, occupies a special place in the national economy owing to its natural resources, favorable geographical location, agricultural potential, and labor resources.

Measures aimed at expanding industrial production, attracting investment, developing the service sector, and creating employment opportunities are being implemented in the region.

The level of a region's socio-economic development is one of the key factors determining the welfare of its population. Indicators such as the volume of gross regional product, industrial and agricultural output, investment activity, the employment rate, household incomes, and the quality of social services shape the living conditions and quality of life of the population.

The purpose of this analysis is to assess the socio-economic development of Surkhandarya Region, study the dynamics of key macroeconomic and social indicators, and determine their impact on population welfare. It is intended to serve as a basis for developing proposals and recommendations aimed at the region's comprehensive development and the further improvement of population welfare.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Issues related to assessing the socio-economic development of regions and the welfare of their populations remain a consistently relevant area of research in economic science.

A number of scientific studies have been conducted by scholars from CIS countries and Uzbekistan on identifying disparities in regional development, ensuring the efficient use of available resources, and developing mechanisms for improving the population's quality of life.

In studies conducted by scholars from CIS countries, income levels, consumption expenditures, poverty indicators, human capital, and the quality of social services are regarded as the principal criteria for assessing population welfare.

In particular, studies conducted by Ata-Mirzayev, Ubaydullayeva, and Umarova analyzed the influence of demographic processes on regional economic development, population growth, and employment, and highlighted the impact of economic growth on population welfare [1].

The authors emphasize that the efficient use of labor resources and the reduction of demographic pressure are among the important factors in regional development.

Issues of regional development and living standards have also been widely studied by Uzbek scholars. A. Soliyev's scholarly work constitutes an important theoretical source in the field of regional economics and economic geography [2]. The scholar analyzed the development of rural settlements, the distribution of regional productive forces, and the efficient use of the economic potential of regions.

Among the scientific studies conducted on Surkhandarya Region, particular attention has been given to research examining the region's demographic, economic, and social development characteristics. The study by Akbar Allamurodov, Davron Ergashev, and Sayfiddin Abdug'afforov analyzed demographic changes, living standards, and social conditions in Surkhandarya Region during the years of independence [3].

The authors note that the region's rapid population growth, abundant labor resources, and the leading role of agriculture in the regional economy have a significant impact on population welfare.

In studies conducted by Z. Tojiyeva and N. Pardayev, changes in the population size and demographic dynamics of Surkhandarya Region were examined.

The researchers showed that the high natural growth rate in the region and the growing share of the working-age population are intensifying the need to create new jobs in the regional economy [4].

These factors indicate the importance of maintaining a balance between the pace of economic development and demographic growth in ensuring population welfare.

Issues related to the statistical assessment of living standards have also been extensively covered in studies by Egamov and Sharipov. They analyzed household incomes, poverty levels, income structure, and the effectiveness of the social protection system, substantiating the importance of statistical indicators in assessing welfare [5]. The researchers note that the growth of real incomes and the reduction of income inequality are important criteria for social development.

Issues concerning the relationship between population welfare and sustainable development have also become an important area of scientific research.

In his study, Sharofiddin Ismatov analyzed the interrelationship between the level of population welfare and regional sustainable development, showing that welfare is not merely an economic outcome but also a key factor in regional development [6].

The author substantiates the need for a comprehensive assessment of indicators related to household income, education, healthcare, and social infrastructure.

Likewise, in the research conducted by Xalimjonov, living-standard statistics, poverty assessment methodology, and consumer basket indicators were thoroughly analyzed [7].

The author notes that, alongside income indicators, education, healthcare, and housing conditions should also be taken into account when assessing living standards.

The analysis of the scientific sources above indicates that the socio-economic development of Surkhandarya Region and the welfare of its population are closely interrelated and are determined by the region's economic potential, demographic situation, investment activity, employment level, and degree of social infrastructure development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed the methods of comparative analysis, logical analysis, systemic analysis, statistical grouping, synthesis, induction, and deduction.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Surkhandarya Region is one of the most rapidly developing regions of Uzbekistan in demographic terms, with agriculture, industry, services, construction, and foreign trade playing important roles in its economy.

Against the background of investment programs, entrepreneurship support measures, and infrastructure development, positive changes have been observed in several macroeconomic indicators of the region.

According to the results for 2025, the region's permanent population reached 3.01 million, indicating that it is one of the country's largest regions in terms of labor resources.

The volume of gross regional product (GRP) increased by 6.6%, industrial output by 9.3%, construction works by 8.5%, retail trade turnover by 10.8%, and the volume of market services by 14.1%. The increase in foreign trade turnover may indicate the gradual expansion of the region's export potential. In addition, the population's real total income increased by 9%.

Agriculture continues to hold the leading position within the structure of the regional economy. The cultivation of cotton, grain, vegetables, fruit, and livestock products forms the basis of the regional economy.

In recent years, the development of greenhouse farming, fruit and vegetable processing, export-oriented production, and the cluster system in Surkhandarya Region has been expanding opportunities for creating added value.

At the same time, the shares of construction materials, food, textiles, and light industry within the industrial sector continue to grow.

The increase in fixed capital investment is contributing to the establishment of new production capacities, small industrial zones, logistics centers, and service facilities. As a result of these investments, new jobs are being created, while population employment and incomes are rising. Scientific studies also confirm a positive correlation between the volume of investment and employment.

The assessment of population welfare indicators shows that the growth of real incomes and the expanding coverage of housing construction, drinking water, electricity, natural gas, education, and healthcare services are improving the quality of life.

In addition, social protection measures and programs supporting poverty reduction and family entrepreneurship may contribute to improvements in population welfare.

At the same time, several development challenges remain relevant in the region, in particular:

- the high share of agriculture in the economy and insufficient sectoral diversification;
- the constraints related to water availability and the need to modernize parts of the irrigation infrastructure;
- comparatively high levels of unemployment and informal employment in certain districts;
- the limited volume of processing industry output and products with high added value;
- the high share of raw materials in the export structure.

These factors may contribute to differences in household income levels and welfare indicators across districts (see Table 1).

Table 1
Analysis of Indicators of Socio-Economic Development and Population Welfare in Surkhandarya Region¹

Year	Gross Regional Product (GRP), bln soums	Investment in fixed capital, bln soums	Industrial output, bln soums	Agricultural output, bln soums	Per capita income, soums	Employment rate, %	Unemployment rate, %	Poverty rate, %
Y1	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	
2010	3394,7	655,3	756,4	2286,8	1718,4	62,5	48,3	25,2
2011	5217,1	802,9	925,8	4099,6	2511,5	62,2	46,3	23,5
2012	6436,4	980,3	1101,8	4825,7	3064,9	62,3	46,6	22,6
2013	7436,4	1371,0	1321,4	5411,0	3530,9	62,7	47,6	21,4
2014	9213,2	1509,1	1615,3	6761,9	4054,5	63,4	52	20,5
2015	11114,4	1843,6	1910,7	8218,0	4560,8	64,3	53,7	20,0
2016	12179,6	2142,4	2200,7	8737,2	5079,8	65,4	56,8	19,5
2017	16354,4	3551,0	2356,4	11608,1	6471,5	66,6	71,0	19,2
2018	21229,4	7240,6	3234,7	15046,2	7984	65,2	105,3	18,7
2019	25473,1	11835,1	4231,3	17844,1	9372,7	67,0	104,6	14,5
2020	27571,6	10068,2	5322,7	19424,0	10219,6	63,9	122,8	14,7
2021	33591,1	12037,8	6675,3	23415,5	12466	64,5	114,0	13,3
2022	39201,8	11569,4	7229,8	26755,7	15259,8	64,2	103,6	13,7
2023	46999,2	18307,7	8848,6	32849,3	16806,5	63,8	80,6	10,6
2024	54354,1	16593,1	13819,8	35234,1	19431,5	63,7	64,4	9,3
2025	66186,5	22758,4	18833,2	42272,0	22572,3	64,8	54,7	6,1

¹ Prepared based on data from Surkhon stat.uz

Table 1 presents the dynamics of the main socio-economic development and population welfare indicators of Surkhandarya Region during 2010–2025. The data show substantial nominal growth in gross regional product, fixed capital investment, industrial output, agricultural output, and per capita income over the analyzed period.

In particular, gross regional product increased from 3,394.7 billion soums in 2010 to 66,186.5 billion soums in 2025, representing an approximately 19.5-fold increase. Fixed capital investment rose from 655.3 billion soums to 22,758.4 billion soums, industrial output increased from 756.4 billion soums to 18,833.2 billion soums, and agricultural output grew from 2,286.8 billion soums to 42,272.0 billion soums.

Per capita income also increased considerably, rising from 1,718.4 thousand soums in 2010 to 22,572.3 thousand soums in 2025. However, since these monetary indicators are presented at current prices, their growth primarily reflects nominal changes and should not be interpreted as real economic growth without adjustment for inflation.

The employment rate remained relatively stable throughout the analyzed period, ranging from 62.2% to 67.0%. A temporary decline was observed in 2020, when the employment rate fell to 63.9%, after reaching 67.0% in 2019. By 2025, the indicator had recovered to 64.8%.

The poverty rate demonstrated an overall downward trend, declining from 25.2% in 2010 to 6.1% in 2025. During 2021–2025 alone, it decreased from 13.3% to 6.1%. This decline coincided with increased investment activity, growth in economic output, and higher per capita income, indicating an overall improvement in several dimensions of population welfare.

The results suggest that positive changes occurred in a number of socio-economic and welfare indicators in Surkhandarya Region during the analyzed period. Nevertheless, a comprehensive assessment of population welfare requires consideration not only of income and employment indicators but also of access to education, healthcare, housing, infrastructure, environmental conditions, and equal economic opportunities.

Therefore, further analysis should focus on the qualitative dimensions of living standards, the territorial distribution of economic benefits, and differences in welfare indicators across the districts of the region.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The analysis of the socio-economic development indicators of Surkhandarya Region shows that a sustained growth trend has formed in the region's economy in recent years.

In particular, the 6.6% increase in gross regional product, the 9.3% increase in industrial output, the 8.5% increase in the volume of construction works, the 14.1% increase in the services sector, and the 10.8% increase in retail trade turnover in 2025 confirm the rising level of economic activity. The 9% increase in the population's real incomes is likewise an important outcome in improving welfare.

The analysis shows that raising population welfare is directly linked not only to the pace of economic growth but also to the efficient allocation of investment, the creation of new jobs, the development of human capital, the expansion of modern infrastructure, and the improvement of the quality of social services.

At present, it is advisable to implement the following recommendations for the socio-economic development and improvement of population welfare:

- diversifying the economy by expanding the roles of industry, logistics, tourism, and services while maintaining the productive importance of agriculture;
- developing the production of goods with high added value, expanding resource- and energy-efficient enterprises for the deep processing of agricultural products, and enhancing export potential;
- accelerating the introduction of drip irrigation, digital monitoring systems, and water-saving agrotechnologies for the efficient use of water resources;
- enhancing governance efficiency through the full digitalization of public services, business processes, and local administration systems in order to develop the digital economy;
- introducing a comprehensive monitoring system for assessing population welfare and forming an integral welfare index based on indicators of income, employment, education, healthcare, housing, ecology, and infrastructure;
- increasing investment in human capital to improve the quality of education, healthcare services, and modern professional competencies, thereby raising household incomes and labor productivity.

The implementation of these recommendations is expected to contribute to sustainable economic growth in Surkhandarya Region, expand employment and income opportunities, reduce territorial disparities, and support the gradual improvement of population welfare.

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