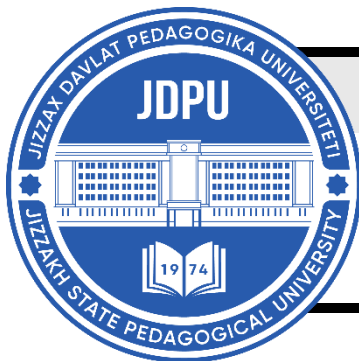


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## HISTORICAL REFORMS IN THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT SYSTEM OF JIZZAX REGION

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### ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** Jizzax region, located in the central part of Uzbekistan, is distinguished by its historical and cultural heritage. In recent years, the reforms implemented in the local self-governing bodies of the region have significantly contributed to its socio-economic development. These reforms aimed to enhance the governance system and bring it closer to the public, leading to improvements in both its structure and legislation. During the historical reforms in Jizzax region, the legal and organizational foundations of the local governance system were improved. New laws and regulations were developed, particularly adapted to territorial characteristics and local needs. The social and economic impact of these reforms, along with their role in increasing public trust in governance, has been significant.

### Introduction

By the first half of the 21st century, fundamental global changes brought the reform of local self-government structures and their role in state and public governance to the forefront of priorities. International documents adopted by the global community emphasize the

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development and implementation of local governance policy principles aimed at increasing citizen participation and activity at lower levels, expanding the powers of local governance structures, and introducing strategic management methods into their operations. This demonstrates the growing reputation of local governance structures globally as vital components of civil society.

Notably, scientific centers in developed countries are conducting scientific and practical research focused on improving sector-specific legislation, digitizing the activities of local governing bodies, implementing modern technologies, and raising the training level of highly qualified personnel.

Furthermore, international research projects in this field are increasingly supported, with special emphasis placed on the role of local self-governance in public administration and citizen engagement, supported by non-governmental non-profit organizations and mass media.

Following its path of independent development, Uzbekistan has implemented numerous reforms to restore the unique traditional social institution of self-governance—mahalla—and to elevate its prestige. These efforts have raised mahalla to a status of governance structure that is unparalleled globally. This has created opportunities for citizens, local governments, and civil society institutions to actively participate in local governance processes.

In this regard, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted, "...mahalla must emerge as a great social force. Because activists, experienced elders, and respected seniors, if they wish, can solve any issue together with the public and guide misguided youth onto the right path." [2.32]

This highlights the crucial role of the mahalla in state and public life, as well as its growing relevance as a subject of scientific research, particularly across various regions.

Analyzing the meaning of the term "mahalla," it is derived from the Arabic word "mahallun," meaning a place of residence, neighborhood, or residential area. Mahallas are considered populated neighborhoods within cities.

The mahalla is a legacy from the past. Its residents live not only based on neighborly ties, but also by a shared commitment to internal order, spirituality, moral norms, and responsibilities. Moreover, the mahalla serves as a unique center of upbringing, uniting its members like a single family. Due to independence, the state's attitude toward the mahalla has changed radically. For the first time in the history of our national statehood, settlements,

villages, hamlets, and mahalla citizens' gatherings were constitutionally enshrined as territorial units of self-governance.

The revised Constitution of April 30, 2023, further elevated the legal status of the mahalla. This normative document contains essential information about the functions and meaning of local self-governing bodies.

In towns, villages, and hamlets as well as mahallas within cities—citizen assemblies serve as local self-governing bodies and elect a chairperson. This process is a core indicator and factor of democratic principles, as such governance at the grassroots level is based on public trust and elections. The term of office is three years, which is also noteworthy.

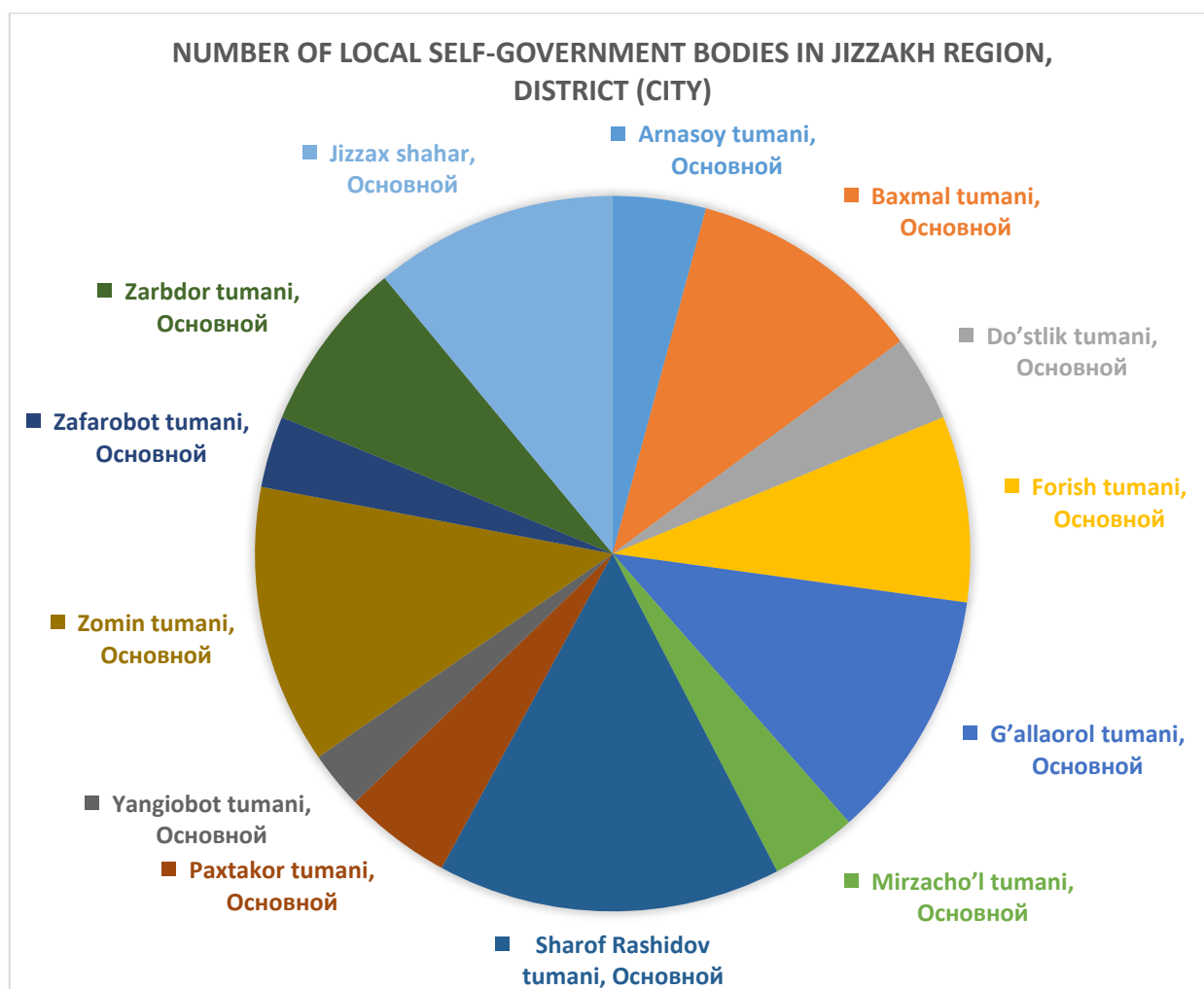
Local self-governing bodies are not part of the state power structure. They are entitled to independently resolve local matters based on public interests, historical development characteristics, national values, and local customs and traditions, in accordance with the law.

The state provides the necessary conditions for the implementation of their functions and assists in the exercise of their legal powers.

The procedure for electing local self-governing bodies, organizing their operations, and defining their powers is regulated by law. [1.87]

Today, in the districts and cities of Jizzax region, the activities of local self-governing bodies, their foundations, and the various socio-economic structures—including general education institutions, preschools, arts and sports organizations, production processes, business entities, and more—play an essential role. According to research, as of 2024, 309 citizens' assemblies operate in Jizzax region. Its administrative center is Jizzax city. The total area of the region is 21.2 thousand square kilometers, comprising 4.7% of the republic's territory. The region includes 12 districts (Arnasoy, Baxmal, Do'stlik, Sh. Rashidov, Zarbdor, Zafarobod, Zomin, Mirzacho'l, Paxtakor, Yangiobod, Forish, G'allaorol), 7 cities (Gagarin, Dashtobod, Do'stlik, Jizzax, Marjonbuloq, Paxtakor, G'allaorol), and 8 towns (Byston, Zarbdor, Zafarobod, Zomin, O'smat, Uchquloq, Yangiqishloq, Qo'ytosh). As of February 2024, the population reached 1,507,004.

In the following table, the ratio of mahalla self-governing bodies to district and city structures in Jizzax region is presented.



The collected data shows that below, we elaborate on the organizational composition and functional essence of district mahallas and institutions within those territories.

Jizzax city is the administrative, economic, and cultural center of Jizzax region. It is located on the bank of the Sangzor River, 460 meters above sea level, along the Tashkent–Samarkand railway and the Great Uzbekistan highway. Its area is 100 square kilometers. The population was 191,700 in 2023. The majority are Uzbeks, with representatives of Russian, Tatar, Ukrainian, Iranian, and other nationalities also residing there. Population density is approximately 191.7 people per square kilometer.

Tashkent is 203 kilometers away. The climate is sharply continental. The average temperature in January is 1.5°C, with a minimum of -35°C; in July, the average is 28.5°C, with a maximum of 46°C. The number of mahallas in Jizzax city is 34. Additionally, major enterprises such as “Jizzaxdonmaxsulotlari” JSC, “Jizzax Akkumlyator Zavodi” JSC, “Jizzakh Textile” LLC,

“Bo'ston Olami” LLC, “Suvoqava” SEU, “O'zbekenergo” JSC, “O'ztransgaz” JSC, “Toza Hudud” SEU, “Issiqlik Manbai” SEU, “Jizzax-Toshtepa Tekstil” LLC, “Jizzax Akkumulyator Zavodi Distributor” LLC, and “Master Building Products” LLC are currently operating in the city.

Modern neighborhoods in the city include Olmazor, Toshloq, Ulug'bek, Zargarlik, Kimyogar, Bobur, Hamzaobod, O'ratepalik, Hayrobod, and Ravallik. The city contains around 280 streets, totaling approximately 240 kilometers in length. Bus routes connect Jizzax with Tashkent and other regional centers. More than 600 retail and household service outlets serve the population.

The city hosts 5 higher education institutions, 7 secondary specialized institutions, 2 academic and business lyceums, a gymnasium, 32 general education schools, and 155 preschools. There are also a musical drama theater, a puppet theater, a television center, 8 children's libraries (housing 87,000 books), a regional concert section of "O'zbeknavo," a regional division of the “O'zbekraqs” ensemble, 2 museums, 2 music schools, and 4 art schools. Jizzax also features 3 sports schools, a central stadium, 2 football fields, 2 swimming pools, a tennis court, 32 gyms, and several sports grounds.

Architectural and historical monuments such as O'rda, Bobo Yakka, Qaliyatepa, and the Nuriddin Hoji Madrasa have been preserved. The newspaper “Jizzax Ovozi” is regularly published in the city. Among the historically significant neighborhoods, Qaliya is considered one of the oldest.

Qaliya is one of the ancient mahallas of Jizzax city. It was formerly a rural council and later became a mahalla committee. In 1990, it was re-registered as a citizens' assembly. Its area is 1.24 square kilometers, with a population of 9,423 people. It has 1,157 households and 2,007 families. The mahalla consists of 20 streets. It borders Suloqli and Ulug'bek in the south, Bunyod and Do'stlik in the north, Bobur in the west, and the archaeological site of Qaliyatepa and the Industrial Zone in the east. The Citizens' Assembly office, built in 1990, is located in the neighborhood center and includes a room for the prevention inspector and several service outlets.

According to M. Pardaev and A. Pardaev, who have long been engaged in the archaeology and history of Jizzax, the ancient and medieval city of Jizzax was located in the eastern part of the oasis, on the site of what is still known among the people as "Eski Jizzax" or Old Jizzax, near

the Qaliya fortress. Archaeological excavations in the citadel and fortress of Qaliya revealed valuable artifacts from the 16th–17th centuries related to its history and social life. Qaliya fortress is considered one of the oldest and largest monuments in the Jizzax oasis and is interpreted as the main city of medieval Ustrushona.

Qaliya mahalla, with its deep historical roots, has developed into a flourishing area during the years of independence and continues to function as a territorial unit.

The mahalla features a secondary school, a service and vocational technical school, a family polyclinic, a private clinic, a training school, 4 barber shops, 5 dining establishments, 20 bakeries, 7 shops, 4 butcher shops, and a central mosque.

It is also home to the ancient cemeteries of Jilovdor ota and Qaliya. The mahalla is fully supplied with drinking water, natural gas, and electricity. Residents practice irrigated farming using the Qaliya kanal, which draws water from the Sangzor River. [4.20]

Below is an overview of the names and founding details of the administrative centers in Jizzax region.

Arnasoy district was established on November 26, 1975. It borders Forish to the north and northwest, Zafarobod to the south, Paxtakor to the southeast, Do'stlik to the east, and Mirzacho'l to the northeast. Its area is 490 square kilometers, and the population exceeds 48,000 people [5]. The majority are Uzbeks, along with Russians, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Tatars, and other ethnic groups. The population density is approximately 98 people per square kilometer. There are 13 citizens' assemblies in the district. Its center is G'oliblar village.

Baxmal district was established on May 8, 1943 (merged with G'allaorol on October 12, 1957, and re-established on August 31, 1971). It borders G'allaorol, Jizzax, and Zomin districts, as well as Samarkand region and the Republic of Tajikistan. The area is 1,860 square kilometers, with a population of over 167,500 people [5]. The majority are Uzbeks (91.5%), with minorities including Russians, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, and others. The population density is about 90 people per square kilometer. There are 34 rural citizens' assemblies. The district center is O'smat town.

Do'stlik district was established on November 26, 1970. It borders Zafarobod, Mirzacho'l, Paxtakor, and Forish districts. The area is 4,500 square kilometers with a population of 68,800 people [4], and a population density of 15.2 people per square kilometer. The

population is mostly Uzbek, with Russians, Kazakhs, Tatars, and other ethnic groups. The district includes 1 city and 12 citizens' assemblies. Its center is the city of Do'stlik.

### **Conclusion**

In future issues, we will also examine the activities of nine local self-governing bodies. Based on the analysis above, the mahallas of Jizzax region hold particular significance due to the urgency of socio-economic transformations.

The historical reforms carried out in the local self-governing bodies of Jizzax region represent an important step toward improving the governance system and safeguarding public interests. These reforms have strengthened the local governance system both legally and organizationally, while also stimulating the region's economic and social development. New laws and regulations, especially tailored to local needs, have increased governance efficiency. Stronger relationships with residents have been established, and public trust in governance has grown. Such reforms ultimately contribute to ensuring the region's sustainable economic and social stability. Continued implementation of these reforms will enable the development of an even more advanced governance system.

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