

## Combating Corruption in the Higher Education System

*Zikrulloh Rahmonaliyev*

*Fergana State University Student of Law Faculty*

**Annotation:** This paper details the proactive efforts of not only state bodies but also educational institutions in combating corruption, along with their views and reflections on this issue, which is perceived as a significant problem.

**Keywords:** "Control of local state authorities," "Public opinion," "Complaints," "Criminal responsibility."

In recent years, significant organizational and legal reforms have been implemented in our country in the fight against corruption. Systematic measures have been taken to raise public legal awareness and culture, and to foster a zero-tolerance approach to corruption within society. Creating a society and a state free from corruption is a strong guarantee for national progress. In his address on December 7, 2018, at the 26th anniversary of the Constitution of Uzbekistan, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized, "We can never achieve our goals by tolerating corruption."

All anti-corruption reforms in our country are aimed at protecting citizens' rights and interests. Special attention is given to fostering a no-tolerance attitude toward corruption in the education sector to prepare independently-minded, morally upright, and competitive professionals. In his address to the Oliy Majlis on January 24, 2020, the President highlighted, "We must create all conditions for our young people who have a passion for education and self-improvement to obtain a higher education. Therefore, we aim to increase the rate of school graduates entering higher education to at least 25% in 2020 and, in the future, to 50-60%." According to the World Bank's analysis, the development of the labor market in our country is occurring alongside economic changes, increasing demand for various professions, and stressing the importance of quality higher education in meeting labor market needs. It is recommended that reforms in higher education align with changes in the labor and economic sectors. The urgency of combating corruption in higher education can be highlighted by several factors:

1. The demand for skilled professionals has increased due to the rapid expansion of public services and the private sector, making highly qualified professionals essential for achieving positive outcomes.
2. In the current market economy, becoming a respected and valued professional requires a higher education qualification.
3. The resulting relationships from these two factors often allow corruption to influence outcomes, leading to serious negative consequences.

The growing demand for qualified professionals in both the public and private sectors and the pursuit of higher education for personal gain drive subjects towards corrupt interactions. Acquiring higher education and becoming a skilled professional requires effort, and not everyone can achieve it through their own abilities, leading some to resort to corruption.

As of today, there are 117 higher education institutions in the Republic, 96 of which are national, and 21 are foreign. Approximately 410,000 undergraduate and 13,000 graduate students are enrolled. Over the past three years, more than 200 legal acts have been adopted in higher education, including the establishment of 6 new universities, 17 branches, and 14 foreign higher education institutions, as well

as the introduction of part-time education in 59 universities and evening programs in 10 institutions during the 2019-2020 academic year.

These measures have raised the higher education enrollment rate from 9% to 20%.

The budget allocated to this sector has steadily increased, from 879 billion soums in 2018 to 1.288 trillion soums in 2019, reaching 1.888 trillion soums in the current year. Salaries for professors and teachers were increased by an average of 25% in 2018, with further raises of 20% on January 1, 2019, and another 25% on July 1, 2019. As the final stage of continuous education, higher education plays an essential role in preparing individuals for professional activity. The global and national interest in obtaining a higher education and the intense competition in this area heighten the likelihood of corruption. For example, in 2019, a total of 1,066,922 candidates, including past graduates, took university entrance exams, with only 121,000 recommended for admission, resulting in an admission rate of 11.3%.

Higher education is often seen as the "first school of corruption" because students, as independent adults, may directly engage in illegal interactions with instructors, developing a tendency towards corruption. Corruption in higher education not only creates unqualified graduates but can also influence those with strong knowledge to adopt corrupt practices.

Over the past two years, 326 employees in higher education have faced criminal charges, with 317 (or 97%) of these cases related to corruption offenses. According to a survey by the Social Opinion Public Center, 29% of respondents in 2018 and 35% in 2019 acknowledged widespread corruption in higher education. In summary, young people lacking sufficient knowledge, skills, and moral character can be easily swayed and led down undesirable paths, ultimately affecting the country's political and social situation negatively.

Considering the significant factors mentioned above, the state has prioritized higher education as a key sector, implementing comprehensive reforms to create a "corruption-free sector." According to Article 14 of the Law "On Education" adopted on August 29, 1997, higher education is intended to prepare highly qualified specialists. In line with this, Presidential Decree No. PF-5847, issued on October 8, 2019, approved the "Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030," outlining measures to combat corruption and ensure transparency.

Furthermore, the Presidential Decree No. PF-4947 of February 7, 2017, "On the Strategy for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan," called for the gradual increase in university admission quotas, while Resolution No. PQ-3775 of June 5, 2018, focused on improving the quality of education in higher education institutions. Additionally, Presidential Decree No. PF-5729 of May 27, 2019, established an experimental "corruption-free sector" project in higher education, which has been implemented since August 1, 2019.

Despite the special attention and care provided by our government to the higher education system, serious issues related to corruption persist. Therefore, it is necessary to identify and address corruption risks within higher education.

## References

1. Sh. M. Mirziyoyev, Speech on the 26th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, December 7, 2018.
2. Sh. M. Mirziyoyev, Address to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, January 24, 2020.
3. Minutes of the meeting of the Republic Interdepartmental Commission on Combating Corruption, "Issues of Combating Corruption and Ensuring Legality in the Higher Education Sector" – January 18, 2019.

4. National Database of Legal Documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2019, 06/19/5847/3887.
5. Nataliya L. Taxonomy of Corruption in Higher Education Peabody Journal of Education,” Newly Emerging Global Issues, 2005, p. 81-92.