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ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF LABOR RESOURCES BY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

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Abstract

In this article, a comprehensive analysis is conducted of the current state of employment of labor force resources across sectors of the economy in the Republic of Uzbekistan, modern trends in labor market development, and the economic effectiveness of state employment policy. The relevance of the study is explained by ongoing structural changes in the global economy, the widespread introduction of digital technologies, intensifying demographic processes, increasing labor mobility, and growing competition in the labor market, which collectively reinforce the need to ensure employment and the efficient utilization of labor resources. The study summarizes theoretical perspectives and scientific approaches in the field of labor force employment and analyzes the interrelationship between the labor market, economic growth, and population employment. In particular, the factors influencing the economic activity of labor resources, mechanisms of state regulation of the labor market, the economic and social significance of employment, human capital quality, and the impact of labor productivity on economic development are scientifically substantiated.

Keywords: Labor resources, employment, labor market, economically active population, unemployment, state employment policy, human capital, labor productivity, economic growth, urbanization, informal employment, labor migration, economic sectors, digital economy, labor market regulation.

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Introduction. Introduction. At present, the issue of developing organizational and economic mechanisms to ensure employment among the active segment of the population and to increase the economic activity of labor resources is one of the most important macroeconomic features of the socio-economic development of society and holds particular significance in the economy. Furthermore, in the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026, adopted on January 28, 2022, at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev, the introduction of an organizational and economic “active” model for increasing the economic activity of labor resources, providing it with the necessary resources and opportunities to directly address the problems of the population and develop the regions, as well as ensuring employment and reducing poverty, were defined as key priorities. In the process of structural changes in the economy, the relevance of studying the problems of increasing the economic activity of labor resources is primarily determined by the need to examine the evolutionary views and conceptual approaches related to this concept from both theoretical and practical perspectives, as well as to study it in direct connection with real socio-economic life before and after the pandemic period.

Materials and Methods. In modern market conditions, the issues of ensuring employment of the population in the real sector, which is an integral part of forming an optimal strategy for economic development, as well as improving the financial mechanisms for achieving this goal, have been studied by such scholars as S. Zhukov, P. Zhuravlev, Keynes, A. Kokina, K. McConnell, R. Mumladze, Yu. Odegov, Rudenko, A. Rofe, L. Sbitova, and A. Smith. These studies mainly developed theoretical and methodological aspects related to labor resources, their socio-economic essence, the classification of the formation of labor resources, the main types and forms of employment of labor resources, labor migration of the population, regulation of employment, and the distribution of population employment across sectors of the economy.

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Analysis and Results. In 2020–2025, labor resources increased from 19.16 million people to 20.60 million people, or by 7.5 percent. During this period, the economically active population rose from 14.80 million people to 15.68 million people, while the employed population increased from 13.24 million people to 14.93 million people. The growth of the employed population amounted to 12.8 percent, which was higher than the growth rate of labor resources. This situation reflects the overall positive results of measures aimed at creating jobs in the labor market, promoting self-employment, and supporting entrepreneurship.

1- Table. Key Labor Market Indicators in Uzbekistan, 2020–2025

Indicator	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labor resources, thousand people	19 158.2	19 334.9	19 517.5	19 739.6	20 085.2	20 602.6
Economically active population, thousand people	14 797.4	14 980.7	15 038.9	15 038.3	15 097.9	15 678.8
Employed population, thousand people	13 236.4	13 538.9	13 706.2	14 014.2	14 261.9	14 933.9
Unemployed persons, thousand people	1 561.0	1 441.8	1 332.7	1 024.1	836.0	744.9
Unemployment rate, %	10.5	9.6	8.9	6.8	5.5	4.8
Economic activity rate, %	73.8	74.1	73.7	72.9	72.3	74.0
Employment rate (relative to labor resources), %	69.1	70.0	70.2	71.0	71.0	72.5

Source: Author's calculations based on SIAT data of the National Statistics Committee. *2025 — preliminary data.

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During the analyzed period, the number of unemployed persons decreased from 1,561.0 thousand to 744.9 thousand, indicating a 52.3 percent reduction. The unemployment rate fell from 10.5 percent in 2020 to 4.8 percent in 2025. At the same time, the employment rate relative to labor resources increased from 69.1 percent to 72.5 percent. This result indicates recovery in the labor market and the expansion of active employment measures; however, it does not eliminate the need to separately assess issues such as job quality, formal employment contracts, labor productivity, and stable income.

As of June 18, 2026, full annual employment data for 2026 by sectors of the economy had not yet been published. Therefore, the current situation was assessed based on the preliminary official data of the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2025. These data make it possible to distribute the employed population according to the National Classifier of Types of Economic Activity (IFUT-2).

The sector's share in employment was calculated using the formula $U_i = (B_i / B_j) \times 100$. Here, B_i represents the number of employed persons in a specific sector, while B_j represents the total number of employed persons in the economy. According to the calculations, the total number of employed persons in the economy increased from 13,236.4 thousand in 2020 to 14,933.9 thousand in 2025. As a result, employment increased by 1,697.5 thousand people, or 12.8 percent, over five years. Compared to 2024, the increase amounted to 672.0 thousand people, or 4.7 percent.

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2- Table Distribution of the employed population in Uzbekistan by sectors of the economy

Sector of the economy	2020	2024	2025*	2025 Share in year, %	2024–2025 Change over the years, %
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	3 499.2	3 240.7	3 132.6	21.0	-3.3
Mining and quarrying	92.5	63.2	66.7	0.4	+5.5
Manufacturing industry	1 597.7	1 548.3	1 699.6	11.4	+9.8
Electricity, gas and steam supply	72.3	68.1	70.7	0.5	+3.8
Water supply and waste management	47.0	49.7	52.8	0.4	+6.2
Construction	1 305.6	1 360.1	1 450.5	9.7	+6.6
Wholesale and retail trade	1 405.4	1 504.8	1 507.9	10.1	+0.2
Transportation and storage	610.5	601.5	584.6	3.9	-2.8
Accommodation and food service activities	302.8	363.5	389.5	2.6	+7.2
Information and communication	58.7	98.6	108.8	0.7	+10.3
Financial and insurance activities	72.5	79.0	82.9	0.6	+4.9
Real estate activities	53.4	63.2	67.8	0.5	+7.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	131.6	144.4	152.6	1.0	+5.7
Administrative and support service activities	98.4	107.5	114.2	0.8	+6.2
Public administration and defense	635.9	634.9	637.0	4.3	+0.3
Education	1 158.2	1 320.2	1 367.6	9.2	+3.6
Health care and social services	669.5	695.2	719.4	4.8	+3.5
Arts, entertainment and recreation	67.0	66.6	66.9	0.4	+0.5
Other services	1 358.2	2 252.4	2 661.8	17.8	+18.2
Total	13 236.4	14 261.9	14 933.9	100,0	+4.7

Source: Author's calculations based on SIAT data of the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *2025 — preliminary data.

In 2025, although agriculture, forestry and fisheries retained the leading position in the employment structure with 3,132.6 thousand employed persons, its share in total employment decreased to 21.0 percent. The next positions were occupied

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by other service activities — 2,661.8 thousand people (17.8 percent), manufacturing — 1,699.6 thousand people (11.4 percent), trade — 1,507.9 thousand people (10.1 percent), construction — 1,450.5 thousand people (9.7 percent), and education — 1,367.6 thousand people (9.2 percent). The share of these six sectors accounted for 79.1 percent of total employment.

The number of employed persons in the information and communication sector increased by 85.3 percent in 2020–2025, reaching 108.8 thousand people. Growth amounted to 16.0 percent in professional, scientific and technical activities, 16.1 percent in administrative and support service activities, and 14.3 percent in financial and insurance activities. Although these sectors demonstrate rapid growth rates, their overall share in total employment remains relatively small. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen vocational training aimed at digital skills, engineering, financial technologies, and scientific-innovative activities in order to expand highly qualified jobs in the labor market.

Also, the nearly twofold increase in the number of employed persons in “other service activities” in 2020–2025 may indicate the expansion of the service market, individual labor, and self-employment forms. However, since the composition of this group is broad, it is necessary to assess the formality of jobs, income levels, labor productivity, and employment stability within this category based on additional microdata.

In general, the current sectoral structure defines three priority tasks in state employment policy: first, retraining labor resources released from agriculture and directing them toward industry and services; second, increasing stable jobs in manufacturing, construction, tourism, logistics, and digital services; third, assessing employment not only by the number of jobs, but also based on criteria such as formal employment contracts, decent wages, skill levels, and 6–12-month job retention.

Legal and institutional mechanism of state employment policy In Uzbekistan, state employment policy operates at several interconnected levels. The first level

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is legislation regulating labor rights, the determination of unemployed status, job placement, vocational training, and financial support. The second level is the institutional system consisting of the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Employment, regional labor authorities, the State Labor Inspectorate, local khokimiyats, and institutions of vocational education and skills assessment. The third level is the mechanism for household-based identification of population needs and targeted service provision with the participation of the mahalla chairperson, assistant to the khokim, women’s activist, and youth leader.

Resolution No. PQ-347, adopted in 2024, strengthened the organization of employment and poverty reduction policy on the basis of performance effectiveness. In 2025, updated regulations on the activities of the Ministry and the State Employment Support Fund were approved, clarifying the procedure for forming and using financial resources. In 2026, Resolution No. PQ-49 integrated permanent job creation, income growth, vocational and social employment, legalization of informal jobs, and financing sources into a single “roadmap.”

3- Table Main instruments and expected outcomes of state employment policy

Policy direction	Implementation tool	Key performance indicator	Risk and limitation
Job placement	Targeted plan for investment, services, agriculture, construction, and vacancies	Number of persons placed in permanent employment; job retention after 6 and 12 months	Risk of fulfilling the plan target through short-term or repeated employment
Vocational training	Voucher-based training, order-based training, skills assessment and certification	Share of graduates employed within 3–6 months	Mismatch between the field of training and employer demand
Entrepreneurship and self-employment	Preferential loans, subsidies, grants, microprojects, and cooperation	New source of income, 12-month business viability, created jobs	Risk of loan default, low profitability, and market access restrictions
Legalization of informal employment	Warning through the Unified National Labor System, formalization of employment contracts, and control	Formalized employment contracts and social insurance coverage	Relying only on administrative pressure may shift hidden employment into another form.
Social inclusion	Targeted programs for youth, women, and persons with disabilities	Stable employment, labor income, and adapted workplaces	Quota or program coverage does not automatically guarantee the result.

Source: Author’s development.

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State employment policy in 2026: analysis of goals and resources

In 2026, it is planned to cover 3,935,834 citizens with services aimed at increasing the population's income. In addition, it is planned to legalize 1 million informal jobs, cover 300 thousand young people through the "Towards a Sustainable Future" program, 100 thousand women through the "Hardworking Woman" program, and 40 thousand persons with disabilities through the "Equal Opportunity — Inclusive Employment" program with employment measures. It is also planned to train 100 thousand unemployed citizens in vocational skills on the basis of vouchers and employer orders. The state program also sets the task of ensuring employment for 180 thousand people through the implementation of 90 thousand microprojects in mahallas.

4- Table Target indicators of state employment policy for 2026

Indicator	Target	Economic meaning
Unemployment rate	4.5%	Reducing the imbalance between labor supply and demand in the labor market
Placement in permanent jobs	1,000,045 people	Creating a stable and formal source of labor income
Coverage with services aimed at increasing population income	3,935,834 people	Expanding sources of income through credit, vocational training, cooperation, and infrastructure
Legalization of informal jobs	1,000,000 jobs	Increasing coverage of employment contracts, taxation, and social insurance
Youth employment	300,000 people	Involving young people in entrepreneurship and high-demand professions
Women's employment	100,000 people	Reducing the gender gap and expanding opportunities for income-generating employment
Inclusive employment	40,000 people	Adapted and remote work opportunities for persons with disabilities
Voucher- and order-based vocational training	100,000 people	Aligning skills supply and demand with employers' needs
Microprojects	90,000 projects; employment for 180,000 people	Expanding small production and service chains at the mahalla level

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Conclusion

The research findings show that the effective distribution of labor resources across sectors of the economy and ensuring employment of the population are among the important conditions for the country's economic development. The processes of digitalization, innovative development, demographic changes, and structural shifts in the labor market observed in the global economy require new approaches to managing labor resources and increasing their economic activity. As a result of the analysis, it was found that in 2016–2023, the number of labor resources in Uzbekistan showed steady growth, which has led to the annual entry of additional labor force into the labor market. The increase in the volume of labor resources strengthens the need to create new jobs in sectors of the economy, increase the economic activity of the population, and ensure a balance between demand and supply in the labor market. At the same time, a positive relationship was identified between the growth of gross domestic product and the increase in the number of labor resources.

The results of studying the employment structure by types of economic activity showed that agriculture, forestry, and fisheries remain the largest source of employment in the country. However, the gradual decline in the share of employed persons in this sector indicates the diversification of the economy and the redistribution of labor resources toward industry, construction, trade, education, and service sectors. In particular, the growth of the employment share in construction, trade, and education confirms the increasing importance of the service sector in the national economy.

During the research process, a number of persistent problems in the labor market were also identified. In particular, the high share of informal employment, the mismatch between labor market needs and workforce qualifications, problems related to youth and women's employment, the high level of external labor migration, and the uneven development of the labor market across regions limit the opportunities for the full and effective use of labor resources.

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Although the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on labor market stability, it was found that employment programs, public works, entrepreneurship support measures, subsidies, and vocational training mechanisms implemented by the state played an important role in providing social protection for the population and preventing a sharp increase in unemployment..

In recent years, labor market reforms implemented in Uzbekistan, particularly the development of self-employment institutions, the adoption of the new Labor Code, the expansion of the vocational training system for the population, the introduction of digital labor platforms, and measures to support business entities, have served to strengthen the institutional foundations of the labor market.

Based on the research findings, the following proposals were developed:

- modernizing the education and vocational training system in order to train highly qualified personnel in line with labor market needs;
- increasing labor productivity and competitiveness by expanding investment in human capital;
- expanding targeted programs aimed at ensuring employment for youth, women, and socially vulnerable groups of the population;
- improving economic incentive mechanisms for reducing informal employment and legalizing labor relations;
- digitalizing the labor market and developing a unified information database on vacancies and labor resources;
- reducing disparities between regional labor markets and supporting internal labor migration;
- expanding new jobs in industrial and service sectors that create high added value.

In general, ensuring the effective employment of labor resources across sectors of the economy, improving the quality of human capital, and developing the labor market in line with modern requirements are important factors for the sustainable growth of Uzbekistan's economy, the improvement of population income and

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living standards, and the enhancement of the country's international competitiveness.

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