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SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL-ETHICAL ASPECTS OF COMBATting AGAINST CORRUPTION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the problem of combatting against corruption in activities of customs authorities, which emphasizes the need of consideration of social, psychological and occupational factors in prevention of corruption.

KEYWORDS: *Democratic Reforms, Corruption, Corrupt Behavior, Socio-Psychological Factors, Professional Ethics, Social Phenomenon, Corrupt Situation, Corrupt Mind And Worldview, Non-Corrupt Culture.*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of further deepening of democratic reforms in our country, combatting against corruption is one of the most pressing issues. However, true justice, honesty and legitimacy must prevail in all areas of building a strong civil society. Corruption, on the other hand, undermines the economic and administrative system of any state.

It is no coincidence that the President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev in his Address to the Oliy Majlis said: "...we cannot achieve the lofty goals we have set for ourselves unless all members of our society get vaccinated with the "honesty vaccine". We must move to prevent the consequences of corruption at an early stage." [1]

Customs is an integral part of the country's economic security system. The presence of corruption in the customs authorities primarily affects the economic situation of the state, as the replenishment of the country's budget depends on the extent to which the fiscal functions of the customs are fully fulfilled. Therefore, the issue of combating corruption is also a very important issue in the activities of national customs authorities.

At present, the customs authorities of Uzbekistan are actively working in the field of combating corruption in accordance with national and international law. In particular, Uzbekistan has joined the World Customs Organization's Arush Declaration, the UN Convention against Corruption and the Istanbul Action Plan.

In June 2003, the 101st Session of the Customs Cooperation Council of the World Customs Organization adopted an updated version of the Arush Declaration. It develops recommendations on anti-corruption measures and strategies for the customs administrations of the countries. According to this document, the practical basis of national customs programs should be as follows:

1. Leadership and commitment;
2. Actions based on the law;
3. Transparency;
4. Automation;
5. Reforms and modernization;
6. Inspections and inquiries;
7. Code of Ethics;
8. Personnel management;
9. Ethics and organizational culture;
10. Relations with the private sector.

According to the updated Arush Declaration, the main responsibility for preventing and combating corruption in the customs system should rest with the head of the Customs Administration and the executive management. It was also emphasized that the fight against corruption should be carried out at a high level and on a regular basis for a long time. [2]

Therefore, national and international law pays special attention to combating this problem, increasing the professional responsibility of civil servants and officials, the inevitability of punishment for corruption offenses, and creates a solid legal basis for criminal prosecution of such offenses.

However, corruption-related crimes are still being committed by government officials and law enforcement officials, and it is being transformed into other forms of corruption. So, we need to pay more attention to this issue. Clearly, corruption is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon that is systematically organized and includes economic, legal, social, moral, psychological, and political factors.[3]

Therefore, the study of the causes and conditions that allow it to be based not only on legal mechanisms, but also on social, moral and psychological approaches - is becoming a requirement of our time.

It should be noted that in addition to increasing the effectiveness of operational and investigative measures to prevent and fight with corruption in customs authorities, there is a need for comprehensive and consistent research.

In this regard, it should be noted that in addressing the above issues, special attention is paid to research issues in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption", adopted on January 3, 2017.

In particular, conducting research on anti-corruption issues, developing scientific methods and recommendations, their rational implementation, forecasting and scientific analysis of the effectiveness of forms and methods used in combating corruption, as well as government support for research in this area and incentives are guaranteed by this Law. [4]

In addition, in the State Program on Combating Corruption for 2019-2020, approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated May 27, 2019 No PF-5729 "On measures to further improve the anti-corruption system in the Republic of Uzbekistan" the attraction of grants for anti-corruption research is also provided for researchers of educational and research institutions.

The task to conduct social, scientific and other research on the state of corruption in the customs system, its scale, dynamics and trends, as well as the effectiveness of public policy in this area is set in chapter 5, paragraph 20 of the Action Plan of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 8, 2019 "On raising the legal awareness and legal culture of the population and customs officers of the State Customs Committee, the formation of an intolerant attitude to corruption in the system".

Within the framework of practical innovative research, the causes of corruption offenses in the customs authorities will be thoroughly studied, scientifically analyzed; proposals and recommendations for the prevention of corruption will be developed.

In addition to economic factors, social, psychological and moral factors influence the occurrence and increase of corruption. Among them, we can pay special attention to factors related to the characteristics and conditions of service activities, behavior, character of employees, personal views on economic security, social thinking, as well as the current state of organizational and social control over service activities.

How important is it to take into account the socio-psychological aspects of corruption? To answer this question, it is important to analyze the cases of corruption in customs practice not only from a legal point of view, but also in a comprehensive way.

At the heart of the socio-psychological nature of corruption are immoral views and criminal acts that undermine the idea of an "honest society" in minds of mankind and undermine high moral values. Because the sole purpose of corruption is to satisfy the material interests of an official in any illegal way: through bribery or some other form of informal incentive.

There are many forms of corruption: bribery, robbery, favoritism, nepotism (for example, preference for relatives, acquaintances and friends rather than professional qualities in employment), protectionism, lobbying (corruption is a manifestation of private interests over public interests), public resources and illegal distribution or redistribution of funds, misappropriation of state and public funds and property for personal gain, illegal privatization, provision of illegal services relying on acquaintances, etc.

Socio-psychological characteristics of a customs officer as a person play an important role in the abuse of official powers in pursuit of material interests and prevention of corruption. Such descriptions include negative moral qualities such as lust, greed, envy, careerism, impurity, repentance, and putting the interests associated with the pursuit of one's material goals above legitimacy. The presence of these qualities in a person means that he has a low level of non-corruption stagnation and tends to create corrupt situations by his own actions. From a psychological point of view, a person prone to committing corruption crimes is called a "corrupt" person, and in sociology his illegal actions are interpreted as a manifestation of deviant behavior, and in the nature of usual bribe-offender social defects can be found.

Psychological aspects of the phenomenon of corruption include:

- Psychology of corrupt behavior (bribe taker);
- Psychology of corrupt minds and worldviews, ie bribe-takers;
- Psychology of public opinion and attitudes towards corruption and its various manifestations;
- Socio-psychological factors, causes and conditions affecting corruption.[5]

The following factors may contribute to the above-mentioned defects in the personality of a customs officer as a civil servant:

- the employee's intention to use his / her official activities in the interests of selfish interests;
- the presence of employees who have achieved high economic well-being through illegal and criminal activities in the workforce;
- high economic security and a person's spiritual desire to live a luxurious life;
- not to feel remorse from the illegal acquisition of material wealth due to the weakness of spiritual and moral education or natural inclination;
- increased interest in expensive things and the habit of owning them;
- accustomed to the large expenses incurred for the material well-being of himself and his family, and desire to cover these expenses through bribery, misappropriation of state budget funds and other illegal income;
- dissatisfaction with the salary paid for the service, underestimation and miscalculation of expenses;
- not paying attention to savings or not knowing how to save, etc.

Ultimately, corruption undermines the values underlying the democratic political-administrative system, the harmony of state, society and human interests inherent in civil society, equality and freedom of citizens, transparency of political governance and public confidence in society.

Anti-corruption issues also play an important role in the personnel policy of the customs service. At the same time, great attention is paid to the moral qualities of candidates and current employees of the customs service, loyalty to their profession, quality and responsible performance of official duties, honesty of officials in the system, constant preventive measures to prevent corruption.

An analytical study of various factors related to the phenomenon of corruption revealed a number of conclusions:

- In our country, the fight against corruption in all spheres of governance, including the customs system, is being carried out on the basis of a comprehensive plan of targeted and concrete measures. However, corruption crimes, which cause great damage to the country's economic well-being, are still being committed.
- In order to effectively combat with corruption, it is necessary to know the nature of corruption. It is expedient not only to study corruption as an economic and legal category, but also to conduct a comprehensive interdisciplinary study on it.

The following proposals and recommendations for combating and preventing corruption in the customs service should be considered based on these findings:

It is necessary to comprehensively study the situation with the fight against corruption in the territorial departments of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. To do this, along with theoretical approaches, practical and experimental research have to be conducted, the results should be applied into the practice of customs authorities and its effectiveness should be monitored;

To pay special attention to the development of sociological and psychological scientific methods (questionnaires, trainings, test kits, analytical documents) on the prevention of corruption and crime, ethical skills related to the professional culture of the customs officer;

Along with the economic and legal measures taken in combatting against corruption, it is necessary to consider the individual-psychological and socio-psychological factors that contribute to corrupt behavior;

Formation of administrative-preventive mechanisms of combating corruption and taking into account psychological factors in their application in practice;

Developing clear socio-psychological and ethical standards in the formation of non-corrupt behavior among customs officers and increase the efficiency of this process;

To study the socio-psychological and moral phenomenon of corruption, as well as the formation of a system of non-corrupt culture and values among customs officials and participants in foreign economic activity;

Developing socio-psychological and ethical standards not only in the recruitment of personnel to the customs authorities, but also in diagnosing a person's propensity to corruption during his permanent service and, conversely, in determining the level of non-corrupt behavior and culture.

In order to carry out this practical research in a comprehensive manner, it is advisable to create automated programs of questionnaires, interviews, tests, experiments and indicators that determine the socio-psychological and professional-ethical aspects.

Based on the above conclusions, it should be noted that the following factors can prevent a customs officer of taking a bribe:

- High moral qualities and social responsibility of the customs officer, including personal intolerance of corruption;
- High and decent salary for a customs officer;
- Satisfaction with the benefits and social guarantees in the system (free medical care, free housing or affordable housing on a soft loan);
- Availability of a system of financial assistance and bonuses in addition to the basic salary;
- A sense of the inevitability of punishment for corruption, refraining from criminal prosecution and fear of punishment;
- The value of the position and profession, fear of losing a job and being fired;
- The fear that the customs officer will tarnish the reputation of himself, his colleagues and family members due to corruption.

The customs officer should have a high legal mind and legal culture.[6]

Moreover, the application of measures proposed in our analysis can not only increase the effectiveness of the anti-corruption strategy, but also help to combat it as firmly and systematically as possible.

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