

## ABSTRACT

of the dissertation work:

**"Improvement of the system of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan" by Aubakirova Zhanna Bolatbekovna, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the educational program 8D04103 – "State and local self-government"**

**Relevance of the research.** The vital importance of this research lies in its potential to bring about significant positive changes across various aspects of contemporary society while ensuring the rights and liberties of individuals and citizens. This is intricately tied to the operational efficiency of all governmental bodies, with particular emphasis on the crucial role played by local administrations

The establishment of local self-government is crucial for a modern state aspiring to build a new, knowledge-based economy founded on innovation and competitive human capital. In the face of emerging global challenges, local self-government can serve as a stabilizing force in fostering economic and societal development by averting and mitigating social tensions. It fosters independence within society, boosts entrepreneurial activity, and sparks greater interest in maximizing the potential for development and utilization of local resources in each town and district. Consequently, this aids in the economic revitalization of remote districts, rural areas, and villages, ultimately leading to the equalization of living standards across the entire nation.

Local self-government serves as an effective mechanism for engaging both urban and rural populations in local governance and addressing crucial issues directly. Therefore, the experience of OECD countries, known for their successful development of local self-government and regional progress, holds significant relevance and interest for Kazakhstan.

The exploration of enhancing the effectiveness and refining the management processes of local self-government appears to be a pertinent subject. Investigating this area will enable us to derive essential conclusions and generalizations vital for the future advancement of the local self-government institution, encompassing both theoretical studies and practical applications.

**The degree of scientific elaboration.** Numerous scientific studies have dealt with the structure and reform of the local government system and the evaluation of the efficiency of the administrative activities of local government managers and self-government. Foreign scholars such as A. Tocqueville, A. Fayol, M. Weber, R. Gneist, L. Stein, Toure, R. Redlich, P. Ashley and others have made significant contributions to the development of the theory of local government and self-government.

Modern research in this field is also reflected in the works of Russian scientists such as G.V. Atamanchuk, Ya.Yu. Startsev, V.T. Batychko, A.S. Prudnikov, V.G. Ignatov, E.N. Belkina, etc. Russian research focuses on current issues of local government and self-government.

Domestic authors such as E.B. Aimagambetov, M.K. Zhetpisbayeva, R.O. Bugubaeva, G.S. Sapargaliev, V.N. Uvarova, K.E. Kubaeva, Z.L. Fedotova, L.N.

Burlakov, S.Z. Baymagambetova, A.A. Taranov, A.S. Serikbayeva, V.F. Romanyuk, G.I. Dosmagambetova, also contributed to the study of the local government system.

Despite extensive research in this area, the problems, prospects and development directions of the local government system are still insufficiently studied. Particular attention should be paid to issues of financial equalization of regions, such as the low self-sufficiency of regions, the strong dependence of local budgets on the state budget, and subsidized regions, which may be less motivated to optimize costs. The relationships between households are also an important aspect that requires comprehensive investigation and development of solutions. In view of these circumstances, a comprehensive study of the local government system is urgently needed to identify prospects for its improvement in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**The aim of the dissertation** is to analyze and develop proposals for improving the effectiveness of the administrative activity of the local government system in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set:

- 1) the study of the theoretical aspects of the development of local self-government, including theories and approaches to the management process;
- 2) to analyze the models of local self-government and their functioning;
- 3) the study of foreign experiences with local self-government and its functioning;
- 4) analysis of the current state of local self-government in Kazakhstan, including the specifics of its formation and the legal basis of local self-government organization;
- 5) identification of problems in the current system of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan and determination of their impact on the effectiveness of local self-government;
- 6) the development of a system of indicators characterizing the development of local self-government in the system of public administration. These indicators are considered as one of the prerequisites for ensuring sustainable socio-economic development of the country, the region and improving the well-being of the population;
- 7) the development of the mechanism of public administration in the system of local self-government, which is currently required:
  - Elaboration of the strategy and tactics of its implementation at the level of local self-government;
  - the development of forms and methods of citizen participation in local government;
  - Increasing the level of digitalization of rural areas, which is necessary to increase awareness and opportunities for public administration to participate in local self-government;
- 8) development of recommendations to improve the effectiveness of management decisions of local governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**The subject of the study** is the system of local self-government, which includes local governments at different levels of government.

**The subject of the dissertation research.** The dissertation research focuses on analyzing and examining various components and aspects of the system of local self-government, including the functioning of akims in rural and local areas, as well as the relationships that arise in the process of local self-government and self-governance.

**The theoretical and methodological basis of this research** is the principles of dialectics, which consider the phenomena of real reality in their natural-historical development, as well as in the context of the relationship between theory and practice of administrative activity. In addition, the paper uses a structural and logical justification of theories and models of local government.

In the course of the study, various private methods of knowledge were used, such as historical, comparative law, logical, system-structural analysis, concrete sociological and other general and private scientific methods.

The legal framework of the study is formed by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, laws and subordinate normative legal acts of various branches of law, as well as international treaties.

**The information base of the dissertation** is formed by strategic and programmatic documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, statistical data of various authorities, results of field research, scientific papers, reports, analysis of periodicals, including electronic sources, and statistical data.

**The empirical basis of the research** is legislative and analytical materials, official publications, analytical and statistical collections. In addition, the dissertation work reflects the content of the messages of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, state strategies, programs and national projects.

**The scientific novelty of dissertation research.** Among the most important results that constitute scientific novelty and have been exhibited for protection are the following:

- on the basis of the researched theories of local self-government, the author has developed a structural and logical justification of the theory and models of local self-government;

- as a result of the literature review carried out, the author has clarified the concept of "local self-government";

- conducted a sociological study based on a questionnaire to determine the main directions of development of local self-government institutions (cities of district importance, villages and counties); proposed a mechanism of public administration in the LSG system;

- recommendations were developed on the formation of the main directions in the field of LSG regulation for the further development of the strategy for the development of LSG in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**The main provisions of the dissertation research to be defended.**

- 1) The structural and logical underpinning of the theory and models of local self-government;

- 2) the definition of the concept of "local self-government" was clarified;

3) the results of a sociological survey based on the questionnaire to determine the main directions of LSG development;

4) recommendations on the formation of the main directions in the LSG regulatory sphere for the further development of the LSG development strategy in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

#### **The theoretical and practical significance of dissertation research.**

The obtained scientific recommendations in theoretical terms provide an opportunity to ensure the effective implementation of the management activities of both the Institute of Public Administration and the Institute of Self-Government. The conclusions, proposals and recommendations formulated in the dissertation can be used in the process of legislative activity and in conducting further scientific research on the problems of local government and self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The practical significance of the research lies in the fact that the scientific regulatory framework for the Institute of Public Administration and Self-Government enables the following:

1) the development of the mechanism of public administration in the structure of local self-government;

2) recommendations are proposed for the development of a strategy for the further development of LSG in the Republic of Kazakhstan, which include the regulatory and legal sphere of LSG and require certain changes and adjustments;

3) A number of amendments and proposals have been proposed at the legislative level aimed at strengthening LSG in the Republic of Kazakhstan in terms of changing approaches to budget exemptions, CIT standards and transfer of VAT from SMEs to local budgets, which can be used by the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Finance in amending budget legislation aimed at reforming inter-budgetary relations, increasing incentives and motivation of local authorities to strive for self-sufficiency and reducing the dependence of regions on the republican budget.

**Recognition and implementation of the research results.** The main research results of the dissertation were published in 8 scientific papers, including 1 article in a scientific journal included in the Scopus database, 3 articles in journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Sphere of Education of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 3 articles in the materials of international scientific and practical conferences, 1 collective monograph from the near abroad. The articles were published in cooperation with scientific advisors.

**The structure of the dissertation.** The dissertation consists of an introduction, three sections, a conclusion, 128 sources used, normative references, designations and abbreviations, 39 figures, 31 tables and 12 appendices.

**The first chapter of the dissertation**, "Theoretical and methodological foundations of local self-government", deals with the theoretical aspects of the development of local self-government: theories and approaches to the administrative process.

**The modern** understanding of local self-government is based on various theoretical foundations: the theory of the free community, the theory of the public authority and the state, the theory of the dualism of local self-government, the theory of social services, the theory of communal socialism, etc. On the basis of the theories of local self-government examined above, the author has developed a structural and logical justification of the theory and models of local self-government. (Figure 2).

In analyzing the theory on the evolution of local self-governance, we have concluded that during evolutionary development a management effect takes place through the development and implementation of purposeful actions, the result of which is:

- Environment - management system;
- Instruments - control mechanism;
- Action - a management process.

Based on these statements and judgments of many founders of the theory of LSG, the author has given his own assessment of the concept of LSG – this is a political and legal way of organizing and exercising local power, which ensures an independent decision of citizens on issues of local importance, carried out by the population through elected and other bodies of LSG, created in rural and urban communities by citizens, which guarantee their legitimacy and ensure stability and continuity of development.

In analyzing the theory of the development of the LSG, the author identifies a dualistic concept whose proponents attempt to find a compromise between the supporters of two extreme points of view. Within this theory, the LSG is seen as a specific level of executive and representative power. On the one hand, it is involved in implementing the will of the state; on the other, it takes the interests of the population most strongly into account (Figure 5).

The degree of development of the LSG, the choice of the optimal level and the models of its implementation in different countries depend on various factors of an economic, socio-political, demographic and historical nature. These factors are interrelated and influence the choice and development of LSG models in different countries.

In order to reduce the risk of wrong decisions in LSG, the use of management methods and the comprehensive use of foreign experience in the selection of planning and management methods is necessary.

Empirical studies by foreign scholars emphasize that the quality of public administration has a direct impact on the country's economic well-being and attractiveness for foreign investment and is related to the transparency of government agencies, which in turn affects economic growth indicators. In addition, there is a direct link between the quality of public services and the standard of living of the population. Therefore, improving the efficiency of public administration is an important prerequisite for ensuring the sustainable socio-economic development of the country and the region and for improving the prosperity of the population.

The current situation in the socio-political life of the country shows that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive dialogue between the current government at the level of the LSG with society and its main institutions.

The development of LSG abroad is based on subjective and objective factors, and a variety of practices have evolved depending on the LSG and its legal regulation. These factors may include historical, cultural, socio-economic and political conditions, as well as the needs and priorities of the population and state structures. Each state has its own unique LSG practice that evolves in the context of its history and legal regime. Laws and regulations that define the powers, structure and functions of LSG bodies are important for the development and functioning of the LSG system.

The diversity of LSG practices in different countries reflects their characteristics and preferences in the organization of governance at the local level. For example, some countries prefer a more decentralized model, where significant powers are devolved to local authorities so that they can make independent decisions and implement their priorities.

In other countries, there may be a more centralized approach with stricter control and regulation of local authority activities (Appendix B). The organization of LSG in other countries varies and evolves as a result of local historical conditions (Appendix B)

The organization of the LSG system in other countries is diverse and evolves as a result of specific local historical conditions. The analysis has shown the advantages and disadvantages of LSG in different countries.

It is important to note that the advantages and disadvantages of LSG can vary from country to country and depend on the specific context and implementation of the local government **system**.

**The second chapter** "The current state and problems of the functioning of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan" analyzes the features of the formation and legal foundations of the organization of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

It is important to remember that the origins of self-government on the territory of present-day Kazakhstan date back to the time of the emergence of tribal and tribal communities during the nomadic way of life. At kurultai and nomadic assemblies, tribal elders and leaders were elected, who were given the authority to settle disputes and to form and command military units. The tribal communities had extensive autonomy and great influence. The opinion of a number of Russian scholars, including A.K. Bisembayeva, supports the idea that the lack of practical experience in self-organisation, free implementation of initiatives and psychological openness of the population is a serious obstacle to the development of local self-government. The development of LSG should be based on civil society institutions, a system of forms and methods of citizen participation, which are still in their infancy in our country.

Kazakhstan has its own peculiarities in the development of the Institute of LSG, which are due to the unitary nature of the state and the gradual nature of the ongoing reforms. It should be noted that the constitutional reforms of 2007

introduced new elements into the content of the LSG institute, including the possibility of delegating the exercise of state functions to LSG bodies in accordance with the law. This enables the gradual transfer of part of the powers from the state to the LSG bodies.

In order to understand the process of institutionalization of local self-government, it is necessary to apply a comparative historical research method that identifies common and specific historical phenomena that make it possible to reach a qualitatively new level of knowledge about national peculiarities in the development of local government and local self-government in Kazakhstan (Table 5).

As a result, the author analyzed the draft Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Local Self-Government in the Republic of Kazakhstan", which allowed the identification of its strengths and weaknesses (Appendix D), as well as an effective analysis of LSG in the Republic of Kazakhstan (Appendix E).

The SWOT analysis makes it possible to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the LSG, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement and threats that could affect its effectiveness. It is a useful tool for the development of strategies and decisions aimed at the development and improvement of the LSG system.

The activities of the LSG bodies naturally depend on the level of development of the region. At present, the role of regional autonomy is increasing, which is inevitable with the decentralization of functions and income between the center and the regions. It should be noted that the decentralization of administration and the formation of the LSG system as the main basis for the democratization of society require an analysis of the possibilities, a scientific justification of the models of this system and the methods for its implementation. Such specific factors as the large territory and unified form of government in Kazakhstan require the choice of a separate model for the formation of the LSG system based on international experience and taking into account local specifics.

The inefficiency of regional policy manifests itself in noticeable differences in regional development, and if the difference in gross domestic product per capita between "rich" and "poor" regions exceeds tenfold, this is dangerous for the state. In a market economy, tax policy is the only means of achieving uniform regional development.

Reviving current processes to strengthen local authorities may not be effective in countries with limited resources. Of course, these processes must be accompanied by a constant review of fiscal policy. The distribution of functions and revenues between budget levels is an ongoing, iterative process that is unique to each country, even when based on the experience of unitary states. The reform of the distribution of tasks and powers is closely linked to the need to improve economic growth and the quality of life of the population.

The study of the impact of interbudgetary relations on LSG in the Republic of Kazakhstan can lead to a deeper understanding of the financing and management system at the local level and provide recommendations for improving this system in terms of LSG development.

To solve these problems, it is necessary to carry out systemic reforms and strengthen cooperation between the public administration and LSGs:

- Develop a clear and complete system of division of responsibilities;
- Strengthen the financial autonomy of local governments;
- Strengthen control and accountability in the use of resources;
- Increasing transparency in decision-making and the use of resources.

The process of public participation in decision-making must also be planned. Therefore, the author has developed a questionnaire to determine the main directions of development of the LSG, namely:

1. Questionnaire for the rural population (village, settlement, aul, district) to determine the effective work of the LSG bodies (Appendix G).
2. Questionnaire for the population (region, district) to determine the effective work of the LSG bodies (Appendix I).
3. Questionnaire for rural LSG bodies (village, settlement, aul, district) to determine job satisfaction (Appendix K).
4. Questionnaire for LSG authorities (district, region) to determine job satisfaction (Appendix L).

**In the third chapter**, "Ways to improve the system of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan", the author proposes mechanisms for improving the system of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The process of development of local self-government involves not only a change in the legal framework, but also a real increase in the civic activity of the local community. However, the practice of holding seminars for assemblies of the local community and specialists of the Office of Rural Akim working with them shows that the activity of the population remains at a very low level.

Passivity leads to inadequate effectiveness of existing civic institutions, such as municipal assemblies, the monitoring of budget expenditures and the activities of territorial councils of local self-government. Ensuring effective interaction between LSG bodies and public authorities is only possible through the development of effective information communication. In this context, it is necessary to create a local self-government body in which mainly the inhabitants interested in the development of their district or region are represented.

Another important prerequisite is the creation of economic incentives for local authorities to promote entrepreneurial activity and strengthen the financial resources of local households. This system makes it possible to considerably simplify the process of organising various events while significantly increasing its efficiency (Figure 35).

The author suggests the following ways to solve the problems of LSG:

1. Ensuring fruitful interaction of local self-government bodies with the authorities of the subjects of the Republic of Kazakhstan is possible only through the development of effective information interaction, therefore, it is necessary to create a local self-government body consisting mainly of local and indigenous residents who participate in the development of their district, region

2. In order for the level of information and communication activities to meet certain standards, it is necessary to establish a mobile group to train rural



administrations and rural Akims in computer literacy and improve their skills in this area, as it is necessary to solve problems related to the following:

- government programs to support agricultural producers;
- Budget financing, allocation of subsidies to farmers;
- the possibility of obtaining information on available loans;
- the possibility for rural entrepreneurs to provide information about their products (services) on the website.

3. For the development of the socio-economic development of rural areas, the author has considered the key components of a model for a targeted policy for organizing citizen participation in the implementation of projects. Achieving a high level of citizen participation in initiative activities will contribute to the development of socio-economic development of rural areas of such forms of direct participation as participation and partnership. We consider the use of the instrument of local initiatives in the implementation of projects aimed at the development of local infrastructure to be effective, because by investing today in providing the population with the necessary material and social services and providing them with a set of social rights and guarantees, the state determines the future fate of socio-economic reforms.

LSG as institutional education is an important element of self-organization and the development of civil society. The involvement of citizens in the decision-making process enables them to exercise their right to govern and influence the decision-making process in the state. In qualitative terms, this right is implemented at the local level in solving local problems. Thus, the LSG is a kind of school for the democratic shaping of local life.

Based on the above, recommendations are given on the formation of the main directions encompassing the regulatory and legal sphere of LSG, which requires certain changes and adjustments in order to develop a strategy for the development of LSG in the Republic of Kazakhstan (Figure 39).

The strategy for the development of LSG in the Republic of Kazakhstan may include a number of measures and principles aimed at strengthening the role and effectiveness of local governments. In the proposed strategy for further development of LSG, attention was paid to the following provisions:

1. Consideration of the issue of expanding the powers of local authorities for more independent decision making in relation to local area development, budgeting and social programs.

2. Strengthening local self-government - providing local authorities with the necessary resources, training and support to perform their duties more effectively.

3. Increase citizen participation in LSG processes through public hearings, the formation of local committees and participation in decision-making.

4. Adopting digital technologies to improve the efficiency and transparency of local government processes, including electronic voting, feedback platforms and electronic interaction with citizens.

5. Creating local business development and rural entrepreneurship programs to promote economic growth in rural areas.

6. Support and develop local educational and cultural initiatives to preserve

traditions and maintain cultural diversity.

7. Develop strategies and plans for the sustainable use of natural resources with the active participation of local communities.

8. Financial support and budgeting - ensuring a fairer distribution of financial resources between the different regions and guaranteeing transparency in budgetary procedures.

9. Facilitate the exchange of experiences between LSG bodies to utilize best practices and avoid repeating mistakes.

10. Support the formation of LSG network structures to solve common problems and promote mutual development.

These proposals can be included in a comprehensive strategy to strengthen LSGs in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Dissertator

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