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**TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC FOOD SYSTEM DURING THE
TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY**

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Annotation: The article examines the transformation of the food service system in Uzbekistan during the transition to a market economy. It highlights privatization processes, cooperation with local producers, the role in women's employment, and the sector's impact on tourism and economic development.

Keywords: market economy, food service, privatization, women's employment, farmers, tourism, transformation

Annotatsiya: Maqolada bozor iqtisodiyotiga o'tish davrida O'zbekistonda umumiy ovqatlanish tizimida yuz bergan transformatsiyalar tahlil qilinadi. Xususiylashtirish jarayonlari, mahalliy ishlab chiqaruvchilar bilan hamkorlik, ayollar bandligidagi o'rni hamda sohaning turizm va iqtisodiy rivojlanishga ta'siri yoritilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Bozor iqtisodiyoti, umumiy ovqatlanish, xususiylashtirish, ayollar bandligi, fermerlar, turizm, transformatsiya

Аннотация: В статье анализируются трансформации системы общественного питания в Узбекистане в период перехода к рыночной экономике. Рассматриваются процессы приватизации, сотрудничество с местными производителями, роль в занятости женщин, а также влияние отрасли на туризм и экономическое развитие.

Ключевые слова: рыночная экономика, общественное питание, приватизация, занятость женщин, фермеры, туризм, трансформация

After Uzbekistan gained independence, the country underwent fundamental economic reforms based on the principles of a market economy. This process led to significant changes in the service sector, including the catering system. Catering enterprises, which were centrally managed during the former Soviet Union, were privatized in new conditions, and their activities were reshaped based on market demands. The transition to a market economy, especially in the 1990s, was characterized by the transformation of the catering system, the emergence of new forms of ownership, changes in the quality of service, and the development of a gastronomic culture based on national dishes.

After independence was declared in 1991, the state identified diversification of ownership as one of the main reforms. In this process, a large part of catering enterprises was privatized, and collective and family business forms expanded [1]. The proliferation of private cafes and restaurants in large cities such as the Fergana Valley, Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara marked the beginning of a new stage in service provision.



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The transition of the service sector from a centralized system to market relations was accompanied by a number of difficulties. On the one hand, catering enterprises, separated from state provision, were forced to operate independently. On the other hand, there was a need to create their own supply chain, retrain employees, and introduce new technologies [2].

Since the 1990s, the development of farms and small businesses has made it possible to provide the catering sector with local products [3]. This has reduced the need for food imports and created a new market for local producers. At the same time, the catering system has also stimulated the development of tourism by widely promoting national dishes.

During the transition to a market economy, the catering sector has become an important source of employment for many women and young people. According to official data, in 1995–2005, more than 40 percent of women's employment in the service sector was provided in catering-related enterprises [4]. This situation contributed to the increase in the economic activity and entrepreneurial skills of women in society.

Since the 2010s, the introduction of digital technologies, online ordering systems, and mobile applications has increased the quality and speed of service in the catering sector. Today, modern cafes and restaurants are expanding in Uzbekistan, as well as in large cities, in small districts and villages [5]. This process has also led to significant changes in the lifestyle of the population. Services that were previously available only in cities are now available to rural residents.

Online delivery services have also become widely popular, saving time, providing convenience, and quickly satisfying consumer needs. For example, in central regions such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Fergana, services such as Express24, MyTaxi Food, Yandex Eats have been widely introduced, attracting consumers to the modern food culture [6].

The introduction of digital services has also opened up new opportunities for small businesses. Women working from home began to enter the market by advertising their products through social networks, Telegram and Instagram pages. This situation has not only increased the quality and speed of service in the catering sector, but has also formed an important part of the digital transformation of the economy [7].

As a result of increased competition, catering enterprises are striving to update their menus, combine national and foreign dishes, and introduce healthy eating standards. This increases the consumer culture of the population and directly affects the development of tourism and gastronomic events [8].

In conclusion, we can say that the catering system has undergone a fundamental transformation during the transition to a market economy. Privatization processes, cooperation with local producers, women's employment, the widespread distribution of national dishes and the introduction of digital technologies have shaped this sector as a strategic sector in the socio-economic life of the country. Today, the catering industry is not only an industry that meets the needs of the population, but also an important factor in economic development, tourism and cultural integration.

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