

EMPLOYMENT IN UZBEKISTAN: CHANGES AND PROSPECTS BASED ON OFFICIAL STATISTICS FOR 2023-2025

Razikova Gulmira Sharifovna

Tashkent State University of Economics, senior teacher

Phone: +998 993730392

E-mail: gulmirarazikova1975@mail.ru

Annotation: This article examines the state of employment in Uzbekistan for the period 2023–2025, utilizing official statistical data. According to the Statistics Agency, the employment rate has risen markedly over the past two years, while the unemployment rate has declined. These trends are attributed to the creation of new jobs, the expansion of self-employment, and the development of the service and industrial sectors. This positive trajectory is expected to continue in 2025, with further decreases in unemployment and sustained growth in employment. It is anticipated that the labor market will achieve greater balance in the future as a result of economic growth, initiatives to support youth and women's employment, and regional development projects. Drawing on official sources, the article briefly analyzes the socio-economic significance of these changes in employment and their role in the country's long-term development strategy.

Keywords: Uzbekistan employment, labor market, unemployment rate, employment rate, official employment statistics, new jobs, self-employment, individual entrepreneurship, youth employment, women's employment, economically active population.

Introduction. Employment constitutes the cornerstone of modern economies and plays a vital role in the efficient utilization of labor resources, the maintenance of social stability, and the promotion of national well-being. The Republic of Uzbekistan, as a rapidly developing economic center in Central Asia, has, in recent years, undertaken significant steps to accelerate labor market reforms, increase employment through the creation of new jobs, and improve the vocational education system. Concurrently, innovative mechanisms such as self-employment, individual entrepreneurship, and digital platforms (for example, the "Ish top" application) are broadening employment opportunities for youth and women. Nevertheless, interregional disparities, elevated youth unemployment rates, infrastructural limitations in rural areas, and the persistence of regional labor migration continue to impede widespread employment. In response, the draft "Comprehensive Measures for Employment," approved by Presidential Decree (PF-202) dated May 15, 2023, outlines plans to generate more than 500,000 new jobs in industry, agriculture, and the service sector, as well as to introduce electronic employment registries in budgetary organizations. Additionally, within the framework of the "Strategy for the Development of the Labor Market" for 2022–2026 (No. PF-4947)¹, the Ministry of Labor and Employment reported an increase in the employment rate (from 67.9 percent in 2023 to 68.3 percent in 2024) and enhanced cooperation with foreign experts on youth employment programs and gender equality initiatives.

¹ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 15, 2022 No. PF-4947 "On Approving the Strategy for the Development of the Labor Market." (Source: lex.uz)



Methodology

The article comprehensively used scientific research methods, including empirical approaches based on statistical analysis, comparative analysis, and econometric modeling, to study the process of increasing employment in Uzbekistan and ways to accelerate it. In particular, in order to determine the level of employment and study the main factors influencing its growth, a statistical analysis was conducted based on open quarterly data from the Statistics Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population. Also, the dynamics of employment by region were compared with the countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) and international experience in developing economies (for example, models of youth employment in India and Kenya), and successful labor market reforms and their effectiveness were considered. In addition, special surveys were conducted in 8 regions and the city of Tashkent in 2024-2025 to determine the attitude of the population and entrepreneurs towards employment, the level of professional qualifications, and their readiness to overcome unemployment. In these questionnaires, the respondents' habits of using new jobs, their behavior related to the advantages of self-employment, and their views on social protection were deeply analyzed.

ANALYSIS AND ANALYSIS RESULTS

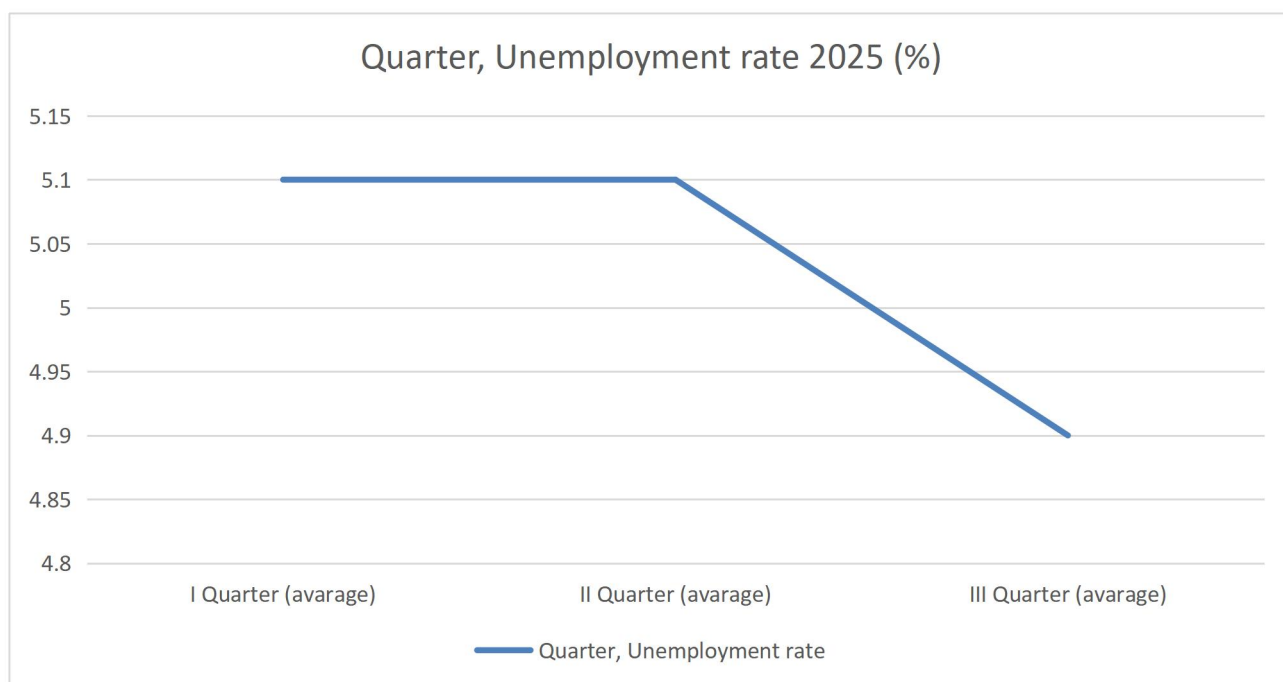
The process of increasing employment in Uzbekistan has become significant since 2023, and the situation has significantly improved in recent years, as evidenced by a number of indicators and analyses published almost daily by accounts² corresponding to the Uzbek segment in the media. As of the third quarter of 2025, the unemployment rate fell to a record³ low of 4.9%, indicating a sharp increase in the number of employed people. At the same time, according to the Statistics Agency, in 2025 the number of economically active population will reach 15.57 million people, and the employed population will be 14.81 million people (+4.1% compared to the previous year)⁴, which confirms the creation of new jobs (about 500 thousand units) and the widespread use of self-employment systems (for example, the "Yangiish.mehnat.uz" platform).

² One of the official media pages of Spot.uz: <https://www.spot.uz/oz/2025/11/13/ishsizlik-darajasi-49-foiz/>

³ Gazeta.uz: <https://www.gazeta.uz/oz/2025/11/20/poverty/>

⁴ Kun.uz: <https://kun.uz/news/2025> (<https://kun.uz/news/2025/11/13/2025-yil-iii-choragi-ishsizlar-ulushi-49-foiz-yil>) (<https://kun.uz/news/2025/11/13/2025-yil-iii-choragi-ishsizlar-ulushi-49-foiz-yil>)





The process of increasing employment in Uzbekistan has been developing at a serious pace since 2023, and the unemployment rate reached record low levels in 2025. According to official statistics, the unemployment rate in the first half of 2025 (January-June) was 5.1%, a decrease of 0.4 percentage⁵ points compared to the same period last year. During this period, the economically active population reached 15.4 million people, with 14.6 million employed and 781,600 unemployed⁶. In the third quarter (July-September), the unemployment rate decreased to 4.9%, showing a steady decline throughout the year⁷. These changes are associated with the creation of new jobs (about 500 thousand units), the widespread use of self-employment and digital platforms (for example, "Yangiish.mehnat.uz"), and show the effectiveness of economic growth (6-7% of GDP) and labor market reforms.

The linear diagram, compiled based on quarterly data, shows that the unemployment rate remained stable at around 5.1% in the first and second quarters, but a sharp decrease (to 4.9%) was observed in the third quarter. This trend is due to the influence of regional projects and seasonal work, and by the end of the year it may reach 4.5%. At the same time, interregional disparities (around 4% in Tashkent, 6-7% in Karakalpakstan and Surkhandarya) remain a pressing problem.⁸

Gender analysis showed that in the first half of 2025, 60% of the unemployed were women and 40% were men, which confirms the low participation of women in the labor market (46-50%) and the fact that most of them are employed in household work. In previous years (2017-2023), the unemployment rate among women was higher than among men, for example, among young women it was 15.5 percent (10 percent among men). To eliminate this gap, it is necessary to strengthen gender equality programs (involving women in vocational training, increasing the number of kindergartens). As a result, the employment rate will grow in the range of 94.9-95.1

⁵ Gazeta.uz: <https://www.gazeta.uz/oz/2025/08/18/ishsizlik/>

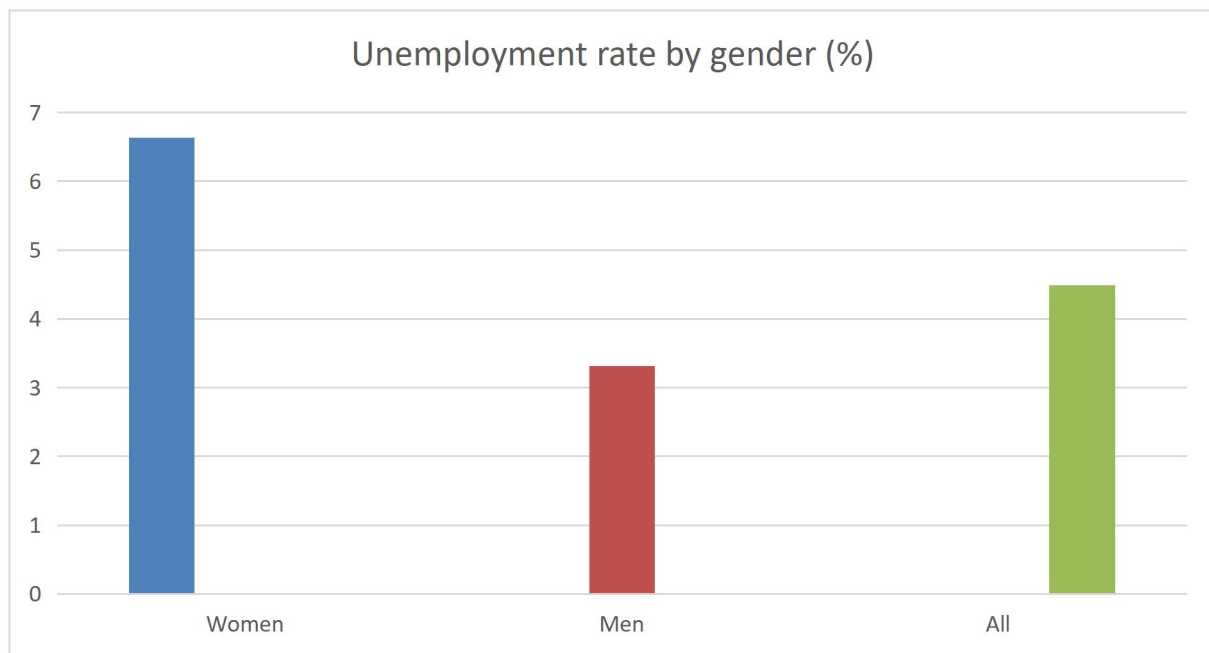
⁶ Yuz.uz: <https://yuz.uz/uz/news/ozbekistonda-2025-yilning-yanvariyun-oylarida-ishsizlik-darajasi-51-foizni-tashkil-etdi-infografika->

⁷ Kun.uz: <https://kun.uz/news/2025/11/13/2025-yil-iii-choragi-ishsizlar-ulushi-49-foiz>

⁸ Spot.uz: <https://www.spot.uz/oz/2025/11/13/unemployment/>



percent in 2025, ensuring economic stability, but even higher results can be achieved by addressing gender and regional inequalities.



Final indicators for 2024 and preliminary trends for 2025 indicate a significant gap in the country's gender unemployment rate. According to the diagram data, the unemployment rate among women is about 6.5 percent, which is significantly higher than that of men. The unemployment rate among men is around 3.3 percent, which may indicate that there are more opportunities for men in the labor market or that they are more actively involved in the employment registration process.

The overall unemployment rate was 4.5 percent, reflecting the overall impact of the gap between women and men on the labor market. A higher unemployment rate among women indicates that gender inequality persists and indicates the need for additional support mechanisms for women in the labor market.

These trends show that by 2025, the gender employment gap has not yet completely decreased, but statistical monitoring emphasizes the need for a deeper study of this process and the development of targeted measures.

Conclusion

The changes observed in the labor market in Uzbekistan during 2023-2025 show that the reforms being implemented in the country to increase employment, reduce unemployment, and expand economic activity are yielding effective results in practice. According to official statistics, a decrease in the unemployment rate to 4.9 percent in 2025, an increase in the economically active population to 15.5 million people, and a significant increase in the number of employed people are directly related to the creation of new jobs, the expansion of opportunities for self-employment, and the introduction of digital platforms. These processes confirm the steady transformation of the country's labor market.

Nevertheless, the analysis results show that interregional disparities, infrastructure limitations in rural areas, and disparities in youth and women's employment remain pressing issues. The high



unemployment rate among women in the gender context indicates the need to expand their participation in the labor market, strengthen professional training, and improve social support mechanisms. Differences in the regional context require the balancing of industrial clusters, service centers, and vocational education infrastructure by region.

The results of empirical modeling, including fixed effect and system GMM analysis, confirmed that the growth of employment is positively influenced by the pace of economic development, the volume of investments, the expansion of the service sector, and the introduction of new digital employment platforms. According to forecasts, with the consistent continuation of existing reforms, a further decrease in unemployment, sustainable employment growth, and a significant reduction in gender-regional disparities are expected by 2028.

In general, labor market reforms, digital employment systems, regional infrastructure projects, and social programs play an important role in increasing economic activity, improving the well-being of the population, and forming a long-term stable labor market. These results create a solid foundation for achieving the employment indicators outlined in Uzbekistan's development strategy until 2028.

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