

# CITIZENS' APPEAL THROUGH THE PRESS AS A FORM OF INTERACTION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND SOCIETY

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**Abstract.** *This article retrospectively analyzes the history of the Institution of the right of appeal of citizens, which has passed a long way of development and formed as one of the main elements of the legal status of an individual and a democratic state in the developed countries of the world, on the example of our country. The role of mass media in dealing with citizens' appeals during the period of perestroika, their role in the disclosure of current problems in society is investigated.*

**Keywords:** *institute of appeal, citizens' right to appeal, mass media, perestroika, public opinion, citizens' letters.*

## INTRODUCTION

The 12th goal of the first direction of the new development strategy of Uzbekistan, aimed at 2022-2026, entitled "Improvement of the organizational and legal foundations for effective public control" is dedicated to "Building a people's state by increasing the value of a person and further development of a free civil society." In particular, it notes "further strengthening of the protection of the role of the media and the professional activities of journalists, the effective use of their work in studying the problems that torment people and the state of implementation of reforms" [1].

This once again shows that the mass media is one of the most important tools for studying public opinion and problems existing in society to solve them.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the right of every person to apply to State bodies, institutions or people's representatives is formulated by a constitutional norm. Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states that "Every person has the right to apply with applications, proposals and complaints directly to authorized State bodies, institutions or representatives of the people, both personally and jointly with others. Applications, proposals and complaints must be considered in the manner and within the time limits established by law." [16, 10 p.].

During the years of independence, the right of individuals to appeal, enshrined in the Constitution, was secured by such laws as "On citizens' appeals", "On appeals of individuals and legal entities".

On May 6, 1994, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Citizens' appeals" was adopted, article 5 of which refers to appeals sent to the mass media:

"Citizens' appeals to the mass media are used to study public opinion and reflect it in the press.

Citizens' appeals on issues whose solution falls within the competence of the mass media are subject to consideration in accordance with this law " [19].

On December 13, 2002, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Citizens' appeals" was adopted in a new edition [20]. This Law has become invalid in accordance with the Law of December 3, 2014 No. LRU-378 "On appeals of individuals and legal entities". Article 7 of this law is called "Appeals and mass media" and it states:

"Appeals received by State bodies from the editorial offices of mass media are considered in accordance with the procedure and terms provided for by this Law.

Appeals to the mass media can be used to study and reflect public opinion in accordance with the legislation on mass media" [17].

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the system of working with appeals of individuals and legal entities" dated December 28, 2016 laid the foundation for the introduction of effective mechanisms for working with appeals of individuals and legal entities. On the basis of this decree, the People's Reception Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established in the Office of the President, as well as People's Reception offices of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regions and the city of Tashkent, in each district and city of the republic.

In continuation of this, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev declared 2017 "The Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests." During this year, the system of working with appeals was further developed, an open dialogue was established between the people and state bodies.

On September 11, 2017, Law No. LRU-445 "On Amendments and Additions to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Appeals of Individuals and legal Entities" was adopted. This law amends the above-mentioned Article 7:

"Appeals received from the editorial offices of the media are considered in the manner and within the time limits provided for by this Law.

Appeals to the mass media can be used to study and reflect public opinion in accordance with the legislation on mass media" [18].

As we can see, Uzbekistan has fully established an equal opportunity for every person to enjoy the constitutional right to appeal. A lot of work is being done to introduce into the life of the state and society the principle which says "The people should not serve the state bodies, but the state bodies should serve the people."

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Today, the focus of most researchers is on such issues as building a civil society, ensuring broad public participation in making important decisions for the state, establishing an open dialogue with the people, ensuring openness of the activities of state authorities and management, establishing a mechanism for public control over their activities [9].

In particular, M.N. Inatov's research is devoted to the study of citizens' letters to state and public organizations as a historical source that serves to study the public mood, determine the real state of society, a more complete understanding of the history of the people, and not the history of the ruling regime [5].

A number of studies have highlighted the perestroika policy pursued by the Soviet state and the Communist Party, the difficult socio-economic and political situation in Uzbekistan during this period, including the development of mass media, but the issue of the work of the media with citizens' appeals has not been studied separately.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To solve the tasks set in the research, such methodological principles as historicity, objectivity, consistency, content analysis were used, requiring analysis of the cause-and-effect relationships of historical phenomena. Special attention was paid to the principles of historical comparison and logical generalization in the coverage of historical data, facts, phenomena and events.

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

At all stages of the centuries-old development of the Eastern states, one of the most important components determining the development of national statehood was the issue of the management system and the institution of circulation. In particular, Nizamulmulk writes in his "Siyosatnoma" ("political pamphlet"): "The king should receive the oppressed two days a week, rebuffing the oppressors, punishing them and directly listening to the words of the raiat". He must accept important applications and respond to each of them. If the news that "The king calls the dodhahs (people seeking justice) and hears their words twice a week and punishes tyrants" spreads throughout the country, then tyrants will not be idle out of fear, thinking about the consequences of their actions" [8, p.20].

Under Amir Temur, the position of arzbegi was introduced on the road. The person holding this position is instructed to organize the reception in the dargah of those who come with complaints, as well as those who express their attitude to the events taking place in the country, to bring to the attention of the supreme ruler received wishes, complaints and suggestions [9, p.8].

Back in the days of the former Soviet republics, a number of resolutions and laws were adopted concerning the consideration of proposals, applications and complaints of citizens. In particular, the Resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of April 12, 1968 No. 2534-VII "On the procedure for considering proposals, applications and complaints of citizens"[2, p.144], which was adopted by Law No. 2830-VII "On the approval of the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR" "On the procedure for considering proposals, applications and complaints of citizens" dated June 26 of the same year [3, p.237]. A number of amendments and additions were made to these resolutions and laws in 1980, 1988 [4, p.192].

However, these decrees and laws existed only on behalf of, and appeals of ordinary people to the relevant officials within the framework of the law with complaints about problems in their daily lives, abuses of public officials could not be treated fairly.

In the difficult situation that developed in the last years of the rule of the former USSR, during the period of the "perestroika" policy announced by the government headed by M.S. Gorbachev, who announced a partial change in his ideas, the search for new forms of work, in short, on the way to some kind of change in imperial policy and the existing system, the ideas of glasnost, diversity were proclaimed opinions. Although the policy of perestroika led to certain changes in the social sphere, the situation in the Union national republics, including Uzbekistan, remained tense.

However, the restructuring has in some ways provided an opportunity for greater transparency, democracy and diversity of opinion. In 1986, the XXVII Congress of the CPSU decided to "turn publicity into a system that does not stop," so that "the people know not only what is being decided at the state level, but also what decisions are made by local party and Soviet bodies, enterprise administrations and trade unions," so that every citizen "receives the necessary information about the activity of the apparatus" [7; pp. 55, 57, 60].

The plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in January 1987 adopted “legal acts guaranteeing publicity” [6, p. 33] the task of development was set. These documents were supposed to ensure a high level of openness in the activities of state and public organizations, to give people a real opportunity to express their opinion on any issue of public life.

An analysis of the activities of the periodical press of the perestroika era shows that the mass media of this period significantly intensified in covering the problems of society. This is especially evident in the increase in the number of people's appeals to the editorial offices of newspapers and magazines and in the reaction of the media to these appeals.

During the Soviet era, letters were considered the most common means of communication not only between individuals, but also between a person and the state. Letters to the mass media as official appeals of citizens also provide “a great opportunity for a more complete understanding of the history of the people, and not the history of the ruling system” [5, p.6] studying the mood of the general public, determining the true state of society, its individual social groups, personality-its mentality, mood, evaluation of their own life and marriage.

The following table shows the number of appeals received by the editors of some newspapers and magazines in the period from 1986 to 1991 [10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15].

**Collection of letters from citizens to the newspaper editorial office**

<b>Editorial office</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Number of letters</b>
“Совет Ўзбекистони” газетаси (Newspaper “Soviet Uzbekistan”)	26.02 – 09.12.1986	25
	03.01.1987 – 23.01.1988	43
“Ўзбекистон адабиёти ва санъати” газетаси (Newspaper “Literature and Art of Uzbekistan”)	05.01.1985 – 4.07.1988	55
“Ёш ленинчи” газетаси (Newspaper “Young leninist”)	08.12.1986 – 02.01.1991	41
“Pravda Vostoka”	26.07.1987 – 02.12. 1988	10
“Қишлоқ ҳақиқати” (“Truth of the village”)	27.01 – 23.10.1987	6

It seems that many people turned to the editorial offices of newspapers and magazines as the last hope when they could not get help from government agencies in solving their problems.

The content of the appeals is also diverse, among which both personal problems and painful problems of society are reflected. In particular, in a letter dated January 5, 1985 addressed to O.Yakubov to the editor of the newspaper “Literature and Art of Uzbekistan” on behalf of a resident of the village of Shekhlar of the collective farm “Zhdanov” Shofirkan district of Bukhara region Bakhshilla Yahyev, which stated that he hanged himself because of slander against his father Rahman Yahyev [15, pp.2-3].

On April 8, 1986, citizen Nurmatov, who changed his surname, expressed his opinion in a letter that schoolchildren are attracted to cotton picking, that they work in difficult conditions [15, pp. 22-25]. In particular, the letter stated that the students would drink only bread rolls and sugar tea in the morning, meat would be given out once a week, and the paramedic would receive notification of their condition only once a week.

Perestroika, publicity, the spirit of democracy that inspires people with confidence in changing their lives, were also manifested in the fact that the arguments in the letters were

expressed boldly and openly. They lay down that the task of today is to be intolerant of shortcomings, to expose the vices of bureaucracy, to strengthen criticism and self-criticism.

Especially letters to the editorial office of the newspaper "Pravda Vostoka", published in Russian, are distinguished by a rather active attitude of citizens to the socio-political changes taking place in society. In particular, the former head of the Bureau of commodity expertise of the Lviv branch of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry V.I.Ryzhak in his article, written under the influence of the articles "Anatomy of bribery" published in the issue of the newspaper "Pravda of the East" dated June 20, 1987, and "Arguments and Facts" dated July 25, 1987, "a bribe of half a million" about cases of corruption [14, p.1].

Most of the appeals received in 1989 to the editorial office of the newspaper "literature and art of Uzbekistan" expressed dissatisfaction with the work of law enforcement agencies. In particular, M.Sabirova from the Andijan district writes that the grandmother was hit by a car, and the driver went unpunished, another letter says that 2-year-old Bahramjan was hit by a drunk driver at the wheel. "No legal claims were brought against the driver of the car that hit my wife, I repeatedly appealed to the Department of Internal Affairs of the Narpai district, recently received a response from them saying that "the criminal case has been terminated," writes H. Abdurakhmanov [21, p.5].

The letters received by the editorial office of the newspaper Pravda Vostoka are very colorful in content: the head of the seminar of the Tashkent Evening University, candidate of Economic Sciences I. Murakaev "Как идет перестройка ("how is perestroika going")" [14, pp. 3-6], a war veteran, retired colonel Crimont "the criterion of honesty is the truth" ("the criterion of honesty is truth") [14, pp. 7-12] and letters about the elections to the Supreme Soviet and local councils, letters of war and labor veteran Belyakov outlining his thoughts on Stalin and perestroika [14, v. 13-15, 16-17, 18-19], A.Kurishv's letter of December 27, 1989. about the Gdlyan-Ivanov case called "Моё мнение" ("My opinion") [14, p. 34], letters of the excavator driver A.P.Chebanov dated November 29 and December 12, 1989 about the fate of perestroika and the role of the party in the new conditions of January 21, 1990 [14, pp. 36, 37-40, 41-46] among them.

Article "Lessons of non-passage", published on May 23, 1986 in the newspaper "Soviet Uzbekistan" under the heading "School reform: research, initiative, experience", was written on the basis of a letter from A.Niyazov from the Zadarya district of Namangan region [10, p.14-21]. In his letter, the author stated his opinion that the involvement of schoolchildren in agricultural work is limited in Namangan region. The head of the district department of Public education J. Makhmudov expressed the following opinion about this: "85-90 thousand hours of classes were missed annually, almost three months. Or in five years the academic year will be lost" [10, p.18].

Letters to the newspaper editor "Soviet Uzbekistan" also reflect the opinion of newspaper reporters about many social and domestic mothers who torment them. In particular, in a letter to the editor dated January 3, 1987, entitled "History and historical development", O. Sobirov outlined extremely relevant thoughts about the need to teach the history of our Motherland in higher and secondary specialized educational institutions of Uzbekistan [11, pp. 1-3].

In the letter of the associate professor of the Department of Philosophy of the Tashkent State Medical Institute, candidate of philosophical sciences Ya. Turdimukhamedov, entitled "an important topical issue of the development of society", the opinion of the Central Committee of the CPSU regarding the project "Main directions of restructuring of higher and secondary special

education in the country" is expressed. In his letter, he reflected on the problems of teaching social sciences at the medical institute [10, pp.89-94].

If we take into account that insufficient importance was attached to the teaching of the history of Uzbekistan during the years of Soviet power, then these thoughts indicate that during the period of perestroika people's desire to revive culture and national values, to study their own history.

And the letters received by the editorial office of the newspaper "Truth of the village" testify to the difficult working and living conditions of the villagers at that time. These letters also often contain considerations about courtiers as a vice of society at that time. In particular, an engineer on labor protection and safety at the collective farm "XXIV Party Congress" of the Chirakchi district A.Yuldashev, under the influence of an article in this newspaper dated January 21, 1987 under the heading "when the personnel policy is violated", wrote a letter stating that nepotism is allowed in the collective farm in which he works when appointing personnel, the plan is violated delivery of meat to the state [13, pp. 6-9]. However, in a reply letter to the editor, the secretary of the Kashkadarya regional committee, A. Muminov, said that these facts were not confirmed [13, p.2].

Similar inscriptions, casts and comments about the harsh conditions in the village of E., who lives in the 1st department, 3rd brigade of the Gagarin state farm of the Bulungur district. Israilov's letters ("Stones on the road-nervous heads", "Superficiality and insult") also found their expression [13, pp.13-14, 17, 18-19].

All newspapers and magazines had departments of letters and public works, as well as columns in which citizens' letters were printed. In particular, in the newspaper "Literature and art of Uzbekistan" the rubric was created, which was called "Letters from grieving readers", which published letters from citizens about various problems in society. Due to the fact that the newspaper did not leave indifferent citizens' appeals, the number of letters from them increased. In No. 6 (3006) for 1989 of the newspaper "Literature and Art of Uzbekistan" it is reported that in the first month of 1989 the number of letters from fans of the newspaper reached 1565 [21, p.5]. The fact that in January the newspaper received 55 official response letters from various organizations and departments indicates that the complaint sent to the editorial office promptly considered the issues and problems raised in the letters and tried to solve them.

### **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a conclusion, we can say that constant attention to the appeals of citizens in society is an extremely important issue. Because the higher the Socio-political activity of citizens, the faster the problems that hinder the development of society are eliminated. Appeals – statements, suggestions and complaints of citizens are one of the main criteria for assessing how effectively the main directions of state policy are being implemented. This provision serves as an important tool for the protection of human rights, strengthening the ties of State bodies with the people, and active participation of the population in solving important issues of state and public life.

The appeal of citizens' appeals to the mass media during the period of perestroika indicates that publicity, which was considered one of the main principles during this period, began to penetrate into the life of society, and the role of the media in it increased.

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