



Theoretical Issues of The Development of Housing and Communal Services

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Abstract: This article explores the theoretical foundations and development challenges of the housing and communal services (HCS) sector in Uzbekistan. While the sector plays a crucial role in ensuring citizens' quality of life and economic stability, academic discourse has often lacked a clear conceptualization of "communal services" distinct from the broader communal economy. To address this knowledge gap, the study utilizes monographic analysis, synthesis, and comparative evaluation of international practices, with a particular focus on historical infrastructure, economic theories, and institutional mechanisms. The findings underscore that Uzbekistan's HCS system requires a shift in perception—from a material-producing sector to a service-oriented activity. Key issues identified include outdated infrastructure, inconsistent definitions, and limited digital integration. The results highlight the need for phased reforms, modernization of equipment, and legal-institutional restructuring. Importantly, the paper emphasizes integrating both market and non-market regulatory mechanisms to improve service quality. The implications of this research suggest that reforming Uzbekistan's HCS system requires targeted investments, broader theoretical conceptualization, and strategic alignment with social policy goals to ensure inclusive and efficient public service delivery.

Keywords: Communal Services, Housing Infrastructure, Public Utility, Service Quality, Market Mechanism, Uzbekistan, Digital Economy, Institutional Reform

Citation: Bobokulov S. B.
Theoretical Issues of The
Development of Housing and
Communal Services. International
Journal of Discoveries and
Innovations in Applied Sciences
2025, 5(1), 13-17.

Received: 20th Apr 2025

Revised: 28th Apr 2025

Accepted: 7th May 2025

Published: 17th May 2025



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1. Introduction

The standard of living of the population is related to the availability of material goods and the level of organisation of services provided in the social sphere. In turn, spiritual and material goods are the products of human thought and the results of effective labour. Currently, according to the methodology adopted by the United Nations, the development ranking of countries worldwide is determined not by their economic potential or military power, but by the level of cultural living standards of the population and the development of human resources [1], [2], [3].

The standard of living of the population is connected with the social policy pursued in the country and the development of the social sector. In turn, the social sphere consists of infrastructures that provide the population with material and spiritual goods. Fields such as education, culture, art, sports, and healthcare serve to educate the population into well-rounded individuals, while the development of communal service systems creates conditions for the population to live a prosperous and decent life [3], [4], [5].

Literature Review

In the scientific article titled "*Smart City: Experiences and Development of State Governance in Russia*" by A.V. Chechulin, S.I. Shelonaev, and T.V. Smetanina, the general principles and models of "smart" management are discussed, and existing foreign

experiences are examined. The article provides an analysis of the normative-legal framework and programs for implementing “Smart City” projects by the regions of the Russian Federation. It also proposes a classification of horizontal and vertical program models. Furthermore, the article highlights the specific features of managing the implementation of “Smart City” projects by regional entities [6], [7], [8], [9].

In the scientific article *“Development Trends of the Housing Fund in Uzbekistan”* by S.N. Normurodov, D.X. Mirzabekov, X.I. Shaymuxamadiyeva, and N.O. Odilova, ideas about the prospects for the development of the communal economy, which is a key link in the creation of communal services, are presented. Additionally, reforms in the housing and communal economy sector, trends related to housing and communal services, housing economy, and housing fund are studied, and necessary suggestions and recommendations are provided [10].

Specifically, Uzbek scholars have not provided sufficient definitions for the category of communal services; instead, they have mostly developed definitions related to “communal economy,” the infrastructure of communal service provision, or types of communal services. For example, in the special explanatory dictionary by economist X.M. Mamatqulov, the term “communal economy” is defined as “a sector of local authorities responsible for urban life-related economic branches such as housing, transport, electricity, water supply, baths, and landscaping” [11]. This definition reflects the activity of the communal economy but does not express communal services themselves, as it mostly explains the communal economy.

One of the scholars who provided a clearer explanation in this regard is Q.J. Mirzaev and M.Q. Pardaev. They state that “communal services refer to services provided by economic entities engaged in improving the living conditions of the population in the local area, including housing, transport, electricity supply, gas, and water” [12].

Among Uzbek scholars who have addressed the category of communal economy are V.U. Yodgorov and D.Ya. Butunov. They define the “housing and communal economy system” as a complex economic system that satisfies the vital needs of the population. They explain that enterprises and organisations related to various branches of the economy in the housing and communal economy sector supply the population with necessary resources such as gas, water, and thermal energy, while also providing employment opportunities for a large number of able-bodied people [13].

Here, the definition mostly pertains to the communal economy and reflects the production process leading up to the provision of communal services, but it does not clarify the category of “communal services” itself.

2. Materials and Methods

The study of this problem was conducted using a range of methods, primarily focusing on the results of monographic analyses of foreign experiences. The research was carried out based on economic methods such as monographic study, analysis and synthesis, and systematic analysis. The experience of developed countries was studied as it plays an important role in revealing the domestic potential for the development of communal services in our country.

3. Results and Discussion

Unless the theoretical foundations of the housing and communal services system are thoroughly developed and substantiated, it is impossible to rapidly develop this system or address other important issues on the practical agenda. It should also be acknowledged that under the current conditions of transition to a digital economy, the theoretical issues of the communal services sector have not been deeply and comprehensively studied from the perspective of a market economy and taking into

account the country's specific characteristics. Even though the communal services system plays a significant role in the population's well-being and the growth of the economy, insufficient attention has been paid to this issue. Perhaps for this reason, it can be observed that scientific research conducted in Uzbekistan has not yet formed a clear scientific understanding of the origin and evolution of communal services. Without knowing the evolution of the communal services sector, it is impossible to substantiate its socio-economic importance.

In this regard, we would like to express some of our thoughts and reflections.

Looking at the history of the housing and communal services sector, it can be seen that a school with a long history and vast resources exists in our country. Even examining the historical monument "Samanid Mausoleum," built by our ancestors and considered the oldest in Central Asia (10th century, around the 980s), we see that besides being a unique architectural masterpiece, it included drainage channels, runoff systems, and communication networks ensuring air circulation to protect from precipitation. This indicates that at that time there was considerable experience in engineering construction in Central Asia, and through this system, communal services were effectively provided.

Analysing the theoretical foundations of the housing and communal services system, it can be noted that they are based on theories of industrial economics, regional economics, and institutional economics. In the system expanding communal services for the population living in a particular area, there are new qualitative relationships and interconnections between entities, which are reflected in the relationships between management bodies of enterprises and organisations and consumers. The essence of these relationships lies in the goal of providing the population with quality services by regularly introducing new technologies into the housing and communal services system, developing housing and communal infrastructure, increasing energy efficiency of communal services, comprehensively renovating existing housing and communal infrastructure, implementing innovative and energy-saving technologies, and socially supporting the population[14], [15].

In our opinion, it is appropriate to consider several factors when defining the category "communal service. For example, it is necessary to take into account both the production factor and the service provision factor in communal services. While service provision satisfies the non-material needs of the population, production mainly meets their material needs. Thus, communal service is a service activity that ensures the operation of legal and physical entities, satisfies the necessary material and spiritual needs of the population for living, and creates opportunities to improve their well-being.

Considering the social character and functions of the housing and communal services system, there is a need for the integration of mechanisms regulating market and non-governmental organizations, see Table 1.

Table 1. Market mechanism in the housing and communal services sector.

Mechanisms	Utility service system	Official Rules	Informal restrictions	Coercive mechanisms
Market mechanisms				
Privileges	Resource delivery service	Selection for the market	Interest in economic activities	Administrative and criminal court
Management company	Management by the housing fund	Competitive selection	Official campaigns	Administrative and criminal court
No market mechanisms				

Editing definitions	Resource delivery service	Formation of rules, definitions	Controlling	Administrative and criminal court
State support for payments for housing and communal services to the population	Resource delivery service	Regulations and subsidies	Providing services with their breaking qualities	Administrative and criminal court

Based on the data from Table 1, it can be concluded that the housing and communal services sector (HCS) is one of the main infrastructural areas determining the standard of living of the population. It includes the following types of services:

- a. Supply of electric energy;
- b. Supply of thermal energy (hot water and heating);
- c. Supply of cold water and sewerage services;
- d. Collection and disposal of waste;
- e. Maintenance, repair, and landscaping of residential buildings.

4. Conclusion

Based on the above, the study of the theoretical foundations for the development of the communal service system in Uzbekistan has led to the following conclusions and recommendations:

Firstly, during our research, it became clear that the communal service system in our country should be regarded not as an object that produces material goods, but as an activity that provides services. This means that instead of considering communal service production and infrastructure, we should focus on the provision of communal services to the population.

Secondly, it is necessary to study the stages of development of the communal service system in Uzbekistan by dividing it into three phases. Each phase has its own characteristics and the importance of the work carried out, which will facilitate researchers in studying the sector and help make informed decisions for system development.

Thirdly, the implementation of structural reforms in accordance with the regulatory and legal framework governing communal services is essential to improve the organization, management, and utilization of the housing fund.

Fourthly, ensuring the efficiency of the communal service system requires a comprehensive modernization of physically and morally outdated equipment, as well as the introduction of modern machinery and technologies. Special attention should be paid to attracting both domestic and foreign investments to this sector.

The above-mentioned measures will, on the one hand, increase the efficiency of the communal system and, on the other hand, improve the quality and standard of living of the population.

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