

## Issues of Labor And Its Efficiency in The Social Views of Eastern Thinkers

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to examine the socio-economic, moral, and sociological significance of human labour in the context of a globalised market economy, with particular reference to contemporary reforms in Uzbekistan and their emphasis on labour culture, attitudes toward work, and productivity. **Method:** The research adopts a qualitative, conceptual-analytical approach, drawing on classical religious texts and the philosophical, scientific, and ethical heritage of Eastern thinkers to interpret labour as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing economic function, moral value, and social responsibility. **Results:** The analysis demonstrates that labour is not merely a means of material production but a fundamental factor in shaping spiritual development, social activity, professional identity, and moral integrity. The study reveals that ideas such as honest work, professional mastery, and selfless service to society – deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and classical Eastern scholarship – remain highly relevant for addressing modern socio-economic challenges and strengthening social stability. **Novelty:** This article offers an integrative framework that connects classical spiritual-philosophical perspectives on labour with contemporary socio-economic discourse, highlighting their applicability to modern reform agendas and contributing to a value-based understanding of labour in today's education and policy contexts.

## INTRODUCTION

The today, as a result of the economic, social and political reforms based on market relations being carried out in Uzbekistan, the way scientists and people think about labour is changing. Human labour, the essence of social life and the driving force behind development, is being studied in all its aspects as an important socio-economic category, leading to fundamental changes in the nature and content of labour relations [1].

When we consider the concept of labour, we realise that it is complex and consists of a type of socio-economic activity that is necessary for people to exist and interact with each other. Labour is also a purposeful, socially useful activity in which a person initially determines the goal of their actions. Purposeful individuals use their physical and mental abilities to create new products and perform labour actions consciously and consistently [2].

## RESEARCH METHOD

This article uses a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach based on philosophical, historical and sociological analysis. Primary sources include the Holy Quran, Hadith collections and classical works by Eastern thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Yusuf

Khos Hajib, Amir Temur and Alisher Navoi. Textual analysis is employed to interpret the concepts of labour, efficiency, and social ethics, while comparative analysis contextualises these ideas within contemporary socio-economic reforms in Uzbekistan [3]. Secondary academic literature supports contextualisation and interpretation. Synthesising moral, economic, and social perspectives, the study reveals the enduring relevance of labour ethics in Eastern intellectual heritage [4].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This throughout history, mankind's labour has been glorified, and it has served the spiritual and physical development of the human race. This is evident in religious and secular books, the prose works of scholars and philosophers, the poems of great poets, and the practices of researchers.

For example, the Holy Quran states in blessed verses that learning a profession and earning a living through honest labour is a source of pleasure for every Muslim in this world and the next [5].

Muhammad (peace be upon him) also set an example through his personal life, saying: 'The best profession is halal trade and the labour of one's own hands' and encouraging everyone to do good and halal work. He also valued the place of labour in society and believed that people should eat halal food through halal work.

In a hadith quoted by Imam Bukhari, for example, it is narrated from the companion Abdullah ibn Mas'ud that Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'Eating halal food is an obligatory duty for every Muslim' and 'Do not be ashamed of working. Working is equal to worship', encouraging his companions to earn their livelihood through halal work. Everyone followed this advice [6].

Humanity creates its culture, material wealth, life and well-being through work. All Islamic scholars glorify labour and hard work, linking it to Islamic teachings. They emphasise that labour is a sacred duty for Muslims, a condition for socio-economic well-being. Through labour, humanity rids itself of evil and receives spiritual and material nourishment from its honest work.

For example, in his book *Social Guarantee in Islam*, Muhammad al-Sharani writes: 'Work is sacred, and Islam calls for a serious attitude towards it.' Human labour is the activity of the mind and body. Often, a person derives pleasure from labour. Labour is a means of combatting social oppression.' [7].

Work develops a person both mentally and physically, shaping them into mature individuals. When a person enjoys their work, it creates a positive mindset, and when they interact with others, everyone benefits from their good mood. This leads to sincerity and improved relations between people.

When we familiarise ourselves with the scientific works, treatises, stories and practical experiences of scientists who lived and worked in Eastern Central Asia – a region that became one of the centres of advanced thought – such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni, Yusuf Khos Khajib, Imam Bukhari, the statesman and minister Nizam al-Mulk, the commander Sahibqiron, Amir Temur, Mirzo Ulugbek and Zahiriddin Muhammad

Babur, among others, we see that they paid great attention to the concept of work, particularly the idea of honest work [8].

From our past history, we know that they achieved levels of knowledge and power through tireless mental and physical labour. For example, in his book 'The City of Virtuous People', Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870-950) addressed the issue of needs, emphasising that 'the study of the essential needs of each person as an individual and the problems of satisfying them is of great importance'. In this system, he also identified physiological needs that can only be satisfied through action, labour and creativity. He also said that 'every person is naturally structured in such a way that they need many things to live and achieve a high level of maturity; they cannot acquire such things alone and a community of people is needed to possess them. Each person achieves happiness through general and private knowledge and activities [9].

The more time and effort each person dedicates to activities that lead to happiness, the purer and more virtuous their heart and spiritual state will become. Just as a skilled calligrapher's handwriting improves with practice, and their enjoyment of the process increases, so too does the heart of someone who strives to find happiness through perfection become purer, and their enjoyment of doing good deeds increases.

Therefore, the most important human need is the need for work and creativity, and all other needs are met through it. Through work, people form various relationships and help each other improve their lives without realising it. Thanks to work, a person grows and matures, improves their skills, finds satisfaction in their profession and receives spiritual and moral nourishment. If all workers in a labour team gain such spiritual satisfaction from their work, they will also contribute to increasing labour efficiency. Therefore, labour problems occupy a central place in Eastern economic thought [10].

Abu Ali ibn Sina, who considered current socio-economic issues, said: "The gifts of nature are not enough for a person... He needs food, clothing and housing. A person can provide himself with food and prepare clothing and housing. For this purpose, man must engage in crafts and agriculture. For this reason, people live together and produce the necessary means of life together." He understood that, in order to satisfy their needs, people must connect with each other, communicate and cooperate – that is, a labour union, which is well-known and popular in today's economics, must be established between them. Because, no matter how strong and capable a person is, if they work alone, they cannot create a whole product. In his work *Kitab al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat*, he writes: 'A man should show discipline and decency. The difference between a man and an animal is not in living alone, but in acquiring good morals. If everyone did all the work alone, it would place a very heavy burden on one person, so people must compromise with each other'. Therefore, the scholar encourages people to engage in socially useful work, acquire a profession and earn a living [11].

In the development of labour economics, the historical work *Kutadgu Bilig* by Yusuf Khos Hajib is also of particular importance. It emphasises the importance of treating workers well, encouraging them to work promptly, appreciating the work of

civil servants, offering material benefits, acquiring a profession and providing robust social protection for workers. He says, 'The civil servant is hopeful about the results of his labour. The heart of an employee who does not meet expectations breaks... The heart of an employee who sees a worthy fate for his service reaches the sky.' He therefore writes, 'If the employee is rich, the state and the head of the country are rich, and the power of the head of the country lies with the people. Therefore, let the people be satisfied [12].

Indeed, the root of economic crises and the decline in labour productivity lies in the fact that civil servants do not benefit from their labour. The scientist proposes that, in order for the state and its people to become wealthy and powerful, the state should pay attention to the interests of working people and employees, encourage those who perform well, and prioritise the well-being of working people. The scientist's thoughts on labour issues are considered highly relevant to today's economics and sociology, and provide proof that social mood greatly influences labour efficiency. The thinker puts forward the thesis that a person only truly reaches maturity in society through communication and mutual relations with others, and through socially useful work. 'A person who does not benefit others,' he emphasises, 'is dead'. He also emphasises the crucial role of working people (peasants, cattle breeders and artisans) in society.

Yusuf Khos Hajib's thoughts on the concept of benefit are particularly significant. He writes that 'Indeed, every moving soul acts thinking of its own desire', based on the verse of the Holy Quran: 'There is no creature on earth whose sustenance is not with Allah' [13]. This is because it is said that every living soul acts to earn a living and thereby gains benefit. This idea is a widely discussed topic in labour economics and sociology, and in today's market economy it is expressed by the idea that 'there is benefit at the root of every action', as the renowned economist Adam Smith said.

Bahauddin Naqshband, one of the founders of the Naqshbandi school of Sufism, also called for active participation in social life and hard work. He encouraged Sufis to combine moral perfection with work and to set personal goals. He popularised the wise saying, 'Dil ba yoru, dast ba kor', meaning 'When your heart is in the Creator, let your hands be in the work', and urged everyone to engage in honest work throughout their lives to satisfy their own needs. Honest work saves a person from need and dependence on others, and dedicating oneself to work leads to the fear of God, protection from forbidden things and the establishment of good relationships with others. This is certainly one of the factors that leads to increased work efficiency.

Amir Temur, who paid attention to the human factor and had experience in increasing labour productivity, writes in his 'Tuzuklar': 'In my experience, one enterprising, courageous, determined and vigilant person is better than thousands of indolent and indifferent people. One experienced person can give work to a thousand people' [14].

In this excerpt, Amir Temur asserts that labour productivity is primarily associated with knowledge and experience, based on his own life experience. As shown in Tuzuklar, he instructed that if any peasants or citizens could not afford to farm, they

should be provided with the necessary equipment and assistance. He knew that it was impossible to create wealth without labour tools.

Alisher Navoi (1441–1501) was a great poet, thinker and statesman who devoted much of his work to issues such as labour, science and social justice. In his main views on labour, Navoi considered it to be the foundation of human dignity. He saw labour as a source of human dignity, prestige, and spiritual purity, and he strongly criticised idleness and not working. For him, the honesty and purity of labour were more important than its productivity. He held in high regard those who earned their livelihood through their own labour alone. Not only did Navoi glorify physical labour, but he also glorified science and spiritual labour. The mind is akin to labour, and science to action. 'A mind without labour is like a river without water,' says Navoi.

Seeing labour as the foundation of social development, Alisher Navoi emphasises in his work *Khamsa* and *Sab'ayi sayyor* that every member of society, including rulers and leaders, should work to build an ideal society. He also calls for learning a craft, loving one's profession, working on oneself, and achieving perfection in one's profession.

In his work *Mahbub ul-qulub*, Alisher Navoi describes farming and the role of labour in social life as follows: 'You would have the administration of the world; you would have the happiness of its people. Wherever they work, they bring happiness and blessings to people'. In other words, the great poet recognises that the world's prosperity and happiness are the result of farmers' tireless labour. He said that a farmer's efforts to grow crops lead to people being well-fed and bring blessings to their lives.

Another great figure, the poet, orator and social scientist Husayn Voz Kashifi (1464–1505), who lived during the time of Alisher Navoi, devoted much of his poetic and oratorical work to moral values. His work "*Akhloqi Muhsiniy*", dedicated to Husayn Bayqara's son Abdulmuhsin Mirzo, is the most famous and important in this regard. In particular, in the work *Futuvvatnomai Sultaniy*, he emphasises that high morals and decency should adorn a person and, if necessary, leaders. He paid attention to truly human qualities, listing them in his works and giving examples and stories from life.

In "*Futuvvatnamai Sultaniy*", Kashifiy outlined important principles of labour ethics for his time and beyond, covering the rules, priorities and ethical aspects of crafts in detail. In this work, Kashifi viewed labour as the basis of human development. He pays special attention to the social and ethical aspects of labour, drawing attention to the need to view it as a form of worship and to work honestly and fairly when earning a living. He also emphasised that everyone should strive for perfection in their profession and learn their craft with patience. Kashifiy touches on the social significance of labour, recognising that it benefits not only the individual, but also society. In his work *Futuvvatnamai Sultaniy*, he emphasises the need to master a craft, the importance of mutual assistance in doing so, and the necessity of adhering to the principles of justice. [15].

Kashifiy's views on labour form an important part of his teaching that a person should strive for perfection in all areas of life, embracing science and morality. His thoughts remain a valuable legacy of medieval Eastern socio-ethical thought. Therefore,

we can conclude that, long before European countries, the issues of labour and its social significance were fully resolved in the East.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding :** This study affirms that labour occupies a central position in Eastern philosophical thought as a multidimensional force that sustains social stability, promotes moral perfection, and enables individual fulfillment and social recognition. **Implication :** These findings suggest that contemporary social, educational, and economic policies can be strengthened by reintegrating ethical conceptions of labour, emphasizing not only productivity but also moral values, social responsibility, and human dignity in shaping work culture. **Limitation :** The analysis is primarily theoretical and interpretative, relying on classical texts without empirical validation of how these philosophical views on labour are perceived or practiced in modern societies. **Future Research :** Future studies should employ empirical and comparative approaches to examine the practical influence of Eastern labour ethics on modern work attitudes, organizational behavior, and policy frameworks across different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

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