



DEVELOPMENT OF CONSUMER BASKETS FOR THE POPULATION: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND NATIONAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

This research article is devoted to the study of the development of consumer baskets worldwide. The formation of a consumer basket is an important tool of social policy, reflecting the standard of living and the minimum needs of the population. The article examines theoretical and methodological approaches to the development of consumer baskets in various countries, including differences in structure, composition, and calculation methods. International practices are analyzed with an emphasis on a comparative approach to defining basic consumption standards. Particular attention is given to the national practice of forming the consumer basket in the Republic of Uzbekistan: its features, regulatory foundations, and existing problems are identified. Based on comparative analysis, the article offers recommendations for improving the methodology for calculating the consumer basket, taking into account international experience and the socio-economic realities of the country.

Keywords: Food basket, consumer basket of the population, minimum level of consumption, rational norms of food consumption, international experience, national practice.

Introduction

Since 2021, the legal framework of our country has introduced concepts such as the "minimum subsistence level" and the "consumer basket" of the population, which are important components of the standard of living. These concepts were first mentioned in 2018 in the State Program for the Year 2018, approved by the



Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 22, 2018, as part of efforts to determine the necessary income level for the population.

At present, these concepts are still new to our country. Therefore, in our view, it is essential to examine the experience of the former Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and other countries in the development of consumer baskets for the population.

A consumer basket is the minimum set of food, goods, and services necessary for a person's survival and the maintenance of health over a certain period. People need to eat, dress, pay for utilities and other services, use transportation, purchase necessary medications, and so on. All these human needs form the basis for creating the consumer basket. It is used to calculate the minimum subsistence level, affects all social indicators, and reflects the overall standard of living.

The Main Part

In developed countries, the consumer basket traditionally consists of three main components:

1. Essential food products;
2. Essential non-food items: clothing, footwear, basic necessities, medicines, goods for cultural and household use;
3. Essential services: utilities, transportation, cultural and educational services, etc.

In many developed countries, the consumer basket is revised at least once every five years based on scientifically developed methodological recommendations. Among its components, the greatest emphasis is placed on the development of the food section.

The formulation of the foundations of a balanced diet, including the structure and volume of optimal consumption, remains a relevant topic in modern research. Studies in the field of rational nutrition for the population began as early as the 1920 s in the Soviet Union.

In 1920, by decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, the Institute of Nutrition Physiology was established within the State Institute of Public Health. This institute initiated extensive work in this direction. Researchers thoroughly studied human needs for proteins, fats, vitamins, and



minerals, as well as the nutritional value of various food products, their digestibility, and their effects on the functioning of different organs in both healthy and ill individuals. The research conducted before World War II laid the foundation for further developments in this area, including the establishment of rational norms for food consumption by the population of the Soviet Union.

Research on rational annual consumption norms for food and industrial goods among the population continued in the mid-1950s under the leadership of the Institute of Nutrition of the Academy of Medical Sciences and the State Planning Committee (Gosplan) of the Soviet Union.

The development of rational consumption norms was studied by O.E. Gubareva, P.S. Mstislavsky, R.A. Chayanov, Yu.L. Shnirlin, and many other Soviet scholars. According to these authors, nutrition norms represent an ideal, physiologically grounded level of consumption that is not directly tied to actual production but rather outlines the perspective for its development.

The importance and objectivity of rationing nutrition was argued by the authors by the presence of limits to needs. In particular, according to O.E. Gubareva, "a person cannot consume more bread, meat, milk, sugar, fruit than is necessary for the normal functioning of a healthy person."

The norms of food consumption in the Soviet Union changed periodically. So, in 1961, the consumption rates of meat and meat products per working person per year were 85 kg, milk and dairy products 322 liters, fish and fish products 14.2 kg, sugar 33 kg, potatoes 103 kg, vegetables and melons 153 kg per year per person.

In 1989, food consumption rates were as follows: meat and meat products 73 kg per year per working person, milk and dairy products 389 liters, fish and fish products 23 kg, sugar – 38 kg, potatoes 126 kg, vegetables and melons 161 kg per year per person.

Thus, in comparison with 1961, the necessary consumption standards for milk and dairy products, fish and fish products, sugar and potatoes have increased. However, the required rate of consumption of meat and meat products has decreased from 85 to 73 kg per year per person.

Currently, the Russian Federation, as the successor of the Soviet Union, has the following food consumption rates per adult per year: bakery products 126.5 kg,



meat and meat products 58.6 kg, milk and dairy products 290 kg, fish and fish products 18.5 kg, sugar – 23.8 kg, potatoes 100.4 kg, vegetables and melons 114.6 kg.

In December 2020, in the Republic of Uzbekistan, by Order of the "Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan", the "Average daily standards of rational nutrition for age, gender and profession groups aimed at ensuring a healthy diet for the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan" were approved.

These standards contain information on the rational daily consumption rates of basic foodstuffs for the main population groups of the republic, in particular, for children (separately for girls, separately for boys), for adolescents under 17 years of age (boys, girls), for the able-bodied population (men, women), for people of retirement age (men, women), because the rational norms of food consumption for these categories of the population vary.

In the process of studying this issue, the author recalculated the average daily standards of rational nutrition into annual standards for population groups in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Table 1 provides a comparative analysis of the rational norms of food consumption per working person in the former Soviet Union, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Table No. 1. Comparative analysis of rational norms of food consumption, kg per year per 1st working person.

	Soviet Union		Russian Federation, 2012 year,	Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020 year
	1961 year	1989 year		
A	1	2	3	4
Bread and bread products	140	120	126,5	120, 5
Potato	103	126	100,4	73,0
Vegetables and melons	153	161	114,6	120,5
Meat and meat products	85	73	58,6	67,53
Milk and dairy products	322	389	290	180,7
Sugar and honey	33	38	23,8	18,25
Fish and fish products	14,2	23	18,5	–



As the analysis of this table shows, the consumption rates of bread, potatoes, milk and sugar in the Republic of Uzbekistan are lower than in the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, and the consumption rates of vegetables and meat and meat products are correspondingly higher. In our opinion, these discrepancies are related to the different climatic conditions of the states and the different mentality of the population.

In general, over the period from 1961 to the present, there has been a significant decrease in consumption rates of meat and meat products, dairy products, consumption rates of bread products and potatoes. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that the quality of human labor has changed, and heavy physical labor, which requires a significant amount of energy, which can be compensated by consuming large amounts of meat, has been replaced by intellectual labor, which requires a significant number of hydrocarbons. In this regard, the diet and standards of needs for various foods have changed.

The composition of the "consumer basket" in developed world countries is determined at the state level and depends on many factors, such as: the biological needs of the human body, natural and climatic conditions, the economic development of the country, the specifics of the production of food and non-food products, the actual consumption of goods and services, the mentality of the population, its traditions and culture.

In the Russian Federation, the Laws "On the Subsistence Minimum in the Russian Federation" of 1997 and Rastatt Order No. 657 of December 19, 2024 "On Approval of sets of consumer goods and services and the list of base cities of the Russian Federation for monitoring prices and tariffs" are in force. There are 279 localities in this list. The minimum consumer basket of the Russian Federation has officially ceased to be calculated and affect the amount of social benefits since 2021. However, it continues to be calculated as additional information. Food accounts for half of its contents (50%), and non-food products and services account for a quarter (25% + 25%).

Since the beginning of 2024 year, the cost of the minimum grocery basket has increased by 10.6%. A meal kit for one person costs an average of 6,656. 5 rubles. The cost of a minimum grocery basket in Moscow is 7976.3 rubles, in St.



Petersburg – 7677.2 rubles, in Chukotka - 15241.7 rubles, in Mordovia - 5244.1 rubles.

For 2025 year, the living wage in the Russian Federation as a whole per capita is set at 17733 rubles, for the able-bodied population – 19329 rubles, for pensioners – 15350 rubles, for children – 17301 rubles.

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the consumer basket is determined in accordance with the Law "On Minimum Social Standards and their Guarantees". Similar to the Russian one, it consists of a set of products, and the total cost of services is calculated as a percentage. The composition of the food basket is approved by the order of the Minister of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and in the text of the order the set of products in the basket is referred to as "scientifically based physiological norms of food consumption."

In 2024 year, the cost of living in the Republic of Kazakhstan amounted to 46,228 tenge. The minimum wage for 2024-2025 is 85,000 tenge. The minimum pension amount is 62771 tenge, the state basic pension payment is 32360 tenge. Since January 1, 2025, the cost of living in Kazakhstan has been fixed at 46,228 tenge.

In the Republic of Belarus, the consumer basket is approved by Resolutions of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus. Unlike the Russian and Kazakhstan consumer baskets, it also describes in detail the composition and quantity of non-food products and services.

In the Republic of Belarus, the minimum consumer budget is approved every four months based on the prices of the last month for the main six socio-demographic categories and various segments of the population (i.e. able-bodied persons, pensioners and children). Accordingly, the volume of the consumer basket is formed differently for a particular category of citizens.

To establish the cost of living indicator, a concept such as the "cost of living budget" is introduced, which is a cost estimate of the natural set of the cost of living, and also includes expenses for taxes and mandatory payments. Its cost is reviewed taking into account the territory of residence, gender and age characteristics of people, and its size is determined based on the prices and cost of the consumer basket, that is, changes in the minimum set of products, non-food products and services necessary for human life. When forming a consumer basket



for a region, natural climatic conditions, national traditions and local peculiarities in the use of food products, non-food products and services are taken into account. As of August 1, 2024 year, the basic subsistence minimum in the Republic of Belarus amounted to 437.8 rubles, having increased by 19% compared to the beginning of the year. Due to the change in the subsistence minimum budget in Belarus, various allowances and increases built into the social protection system, as well as certain social benefits calculated based on the size of the subsistence minimum budget, are automatically revised. In particular:

- amounts of state benefits for families raising children;
- additional payments to pensioners aged 75 and older receiving pensions from the labor, employment, and social protection authorities;
- car allowances for persons with Group I disabilities or for individuals aged 80 and over.

In European countries, for example, in Germany, the composition of the consumer basket is strictly monitored by the state statistical office, which regularly makes its own amendments to the list of goods and services. To determine the expenses of their citizens, experts study the primary needs of various social groups, including large families, single mothers, the elderly, etc.

The composition of the consumer basket is formed by the residents of the country themselves. The basket is adjusted every five years. The Federal Statistical Office conducts a survey of 60,000 families and forms a consumer basket based on the size of their expenses and their structure.

The German consumer basket includes about 750 types of goods and services, including visits to tanning salons, fitness centers and bicycle workshops, the cost of kindergartens, care in homes for the elderly and disabled, the purchase of flowers, outpatient home care and even grocery delivery.

In Germany, the most important categories in the consumer basket are housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels (32 percent of the total weight), transport (13 percent), recreation, entertainment and culture (11 percent), food and non-alcoholic beverages (10 percent). The basket also includes various goods and services (7 percent), furniture, lighting equipment, household appliances and other household equipment (5 percent), restaurant and accommodation services (5 percent), healthcare (5 percent) and clothing and footwear (5 percent), the



remaining 7 percent of the basket is alcoholic drinks and tobacco, communication and education.

In 2024 year, the cost of a consumer basket in Germany varied depending on the region and lifestyle. For one person in the city center, it was approximately 1,880 euros, and for a family of four, it was 5,040 euros. On average, the cost of living (including rent) was about 2,846 euros per month.

As we can see, the specifics of forming a "consumer basket" and the set of goods and services included in it are different in each country. The composition of the "consumer basket" is determined at the state level and depends on many factors. As already noted, the consumer basket is developed separately for the three main socio-demographic groups of the population:

- able-bodied population;
- pensioners;
- children, as their food consumption rates are different.

Results

In the course of the study, the author calculated the composition and cost of food baskets for the three above-mentioned population groups of the Republic of Uzbekistan by gender as of December 2024 and conducted a comparative analysis of the results obtained (see Table No. 2).

When calculating these consumer baskets, the prices of basic foodstuffs that existed at that time and the average daily standards of rational nutrition for population groups by age, gender and profession, aimed at ensuring a healthy diet for the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan, developed by the Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan, were taken into account.



Table No. 2. Comparison of food baskets of different categories of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2024.

The cost of the food basket, thousand soums	for young people under 17 years of age.		the working-age population		pensioners	
	boys	girls	men	women	men	women
Annual	15 267	14408	15316	14494,7	13766,3	13482,3
Monthly	1272,3	1201	1276	1207,9	1147,2	1123,52
Daily	41,83	39,47	41,96	39,71	37,72	36,93

As the analysis of the above table shows, the food basket of a working man has the highest cost of 15316 thousand sums per year. This is the amount that, taking into account the norms of rational consumption developed in the republic, is sufficient to cover the need for products containing the necessary calories, minerals and nutrients for the effective functioning of the male body.

The lowest cost is the food basket of a retired woman in the amount of 13482.3 thousand sums per year. Accordingly, this is the amount that, taking into account the norms of rational consumption developed in the republic, is sufficient to cover the need for products containing the necessary calories, minerals and nutrients for the effective functioning of a female non-functioning organism.

Taking into account the fact that, according to the information of the National Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 45.3% of the total consumer spending of the population is food expenses, and all the rest is non-food expenses and expenses for services received, the approximate cost of consumer baskets of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan was determined by the simplest mathematical calculations (see Table No. 3).



Table No. 3. The cost of consumer baskets of different categories of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2024.

The cost of the food basket, thousand soums	for young people under 17 years of age.		the working-age population		pensioners	
	boys	girls	men	Жен.	boys	girls
Annual	33694,27	31789,47	33802,41	31989,8	30382,22	29755,4
Monthly	33694,27	2649,87	2816,87	2665,81	2531,85	2479,62
Daily	92,31	87,09	92,61	87,64	83,24	81,52

The analysis of this table shows that the highest cost of the consumer basket in the amount of 33,802.41 thousand sums per year is for working men, the lowest cost of the consumer basket of the Republic of Uzbekistan is for retired women 29,755.44 thousand sums. The difference in the cost of their consumer baskets is 4,046.97 thousand sums per person per year.

As the analysis shows, consumer baskets of the population consist of the minimum human expenditure on consumer goods and services, and the prices of these goods and services directly affect the cost of living of the country's population. The high cost of living is evidence not only of the large number of products and services included in the consumer basket, but also of rising prices for them, the high cost of medicines, food, utilities, etc.

In our opinion, when developing consumer baskets for the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan, it is necessary to take into account the specific factors of the republic's development and the positive experience of other states in this matter. In particular, it is necessary to take into account:

- demographic factors: the size and structure of families, the composition and age structure of the population, etc.;
- socio-economic factors: the actual consumption of food, non-food products and services in the families of the republic;
- the needs of all population groups, their income levels, etc.;



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- scientific recommendations on minimum consumption volumes and the list of goods and services necessary to preserve human health and ensure its vital activity;
 - real market prices for goods and services;
 - the experience of other countries in this matter, including periodic revision of the composition of the "consumer basket", and regular indexation of the subsistence level depending on rising prices for food and services.

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