

# THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CAUSES OF POVERTY IN THE TASHKENT REGION AND MEASURES TO REDUCE IT (BASED ON A SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY)

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## **Abstract**

This article discusses the causes of poverty in the Tashkent region and the assessment of measures to reduce it (based on a sociological survey). The article also analyzes the results of the study based on the answers of respondents who participated in the sociological survey.

**Key words:** Sociological survey, poverty, state program, inflation, employment, entrepreneurship, investment, education system, transport infrastructure, entrepreneurial activity.

# ОЦЕНКА ПРИЧИН БЕДНОСТИ В ТАШКЕНТСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ И МЕРЫ ПО ЕЕ СОКРАЩЕНИЮ (НА ОСНОВЕ СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ)

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются причины бедности в Ташкентской области и оценка мер по ее снижению (на основе социологического опроса). В статье также анализируются результаты исследования, основанные на ответах респондентов, принявших участие в социологическом опросе.

**Ключевые слова:** Социологическое исследование, бедность, государственная программа, инфляция, занятость, предпринимательство, инвестиции, система образования, транспортная инфраструктура, предпринимательская активность.

In recent years, important reforms have been implemented in the Tashkent region aimed at reducing poverty in the regions, the territorial characteristics of poverty. In order to study the causes of poverty and ideas on implementing measures to reduce it, as well as to identify problems related to ensuring employment of the population by creating new jobs to reduce poverty in the Tashkent region, their study and analysis, and identification of problems that hinder poverty reduction are defined as the main tasks of the research work.

Sociological surveys are widely used in studying the socio-demographic situation of the population of the region. The fact that questionnaire surveys are comprehensively structured based on a specific purpose is of great importance for the effective conduct of research. It allows for a wide study of the employment, demands and needs of the population in the sectors of the economy. In this case, the researcher must carefully plan the ways of processing and analyzing the results of the questionnaire survey.

Poverty as a social phenomenon has been of interest not only to economists-researchers, but also to geographers. Today, there is a growing interest in analyzing this problem from the perspective of a sociological approach, which allows us to identify the versatility of the approach, justify the feasibility of an integrated approach to analysis, and develop strategic approaches to eliminating poverty in modern conditions.

In the context of modernization and globalization of the economy, socio-economic changes taking place in the lives of the population cannot but affect their living conditions and work to a certain extent. In any developed society, the needs of the population are primary and are closely related to ensuring employment and creating broad opportunities for them. This, in turn, leads to many positive changes in the living conditions of the population. In most scientific studies on poverty and its territorial characteristics, statistical, analytical, and socio-economic survey methods have been widely used to reflect problems and their solutions. In this regard, by observing the territorial characteristics of poverty in the Tashkent

region, socio-economic problems and socio-demographic factors affecting them were studied using the socio-survey method.

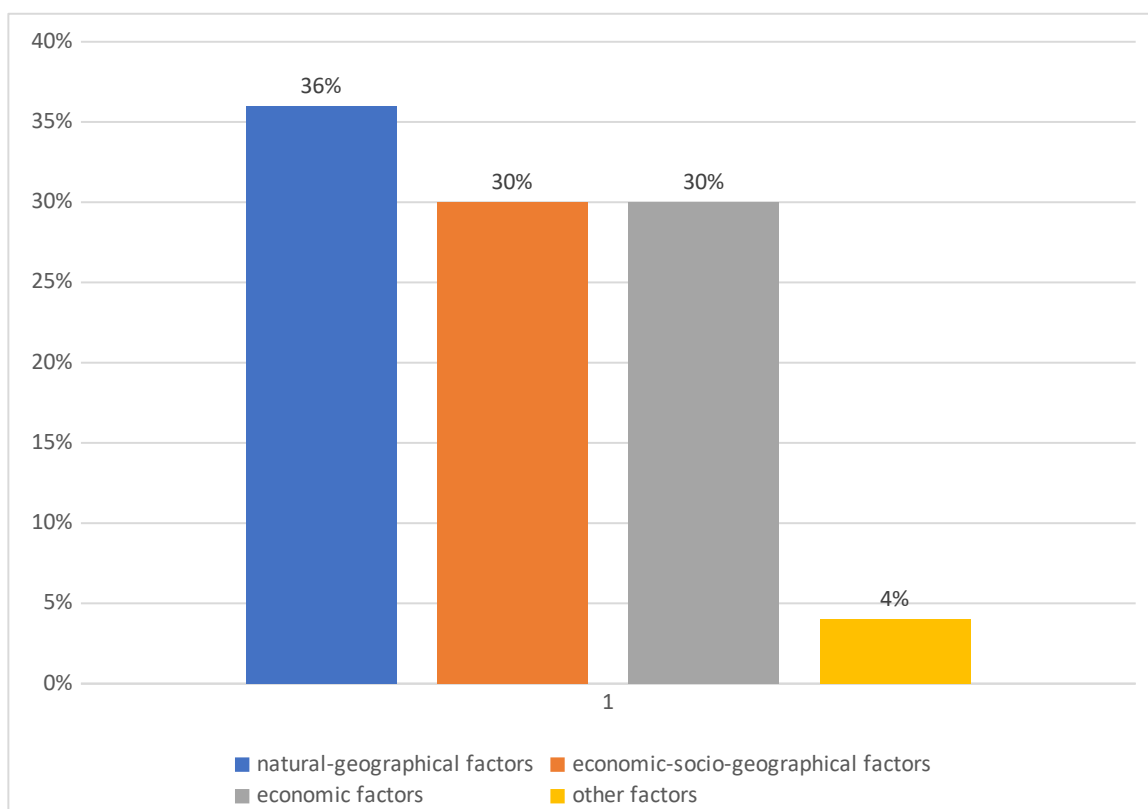
The results of the survey, conducted in order to assess the causes of poverty and measures to reduce it, collect employment and other socio-demographic data, were selected from 10 neighborhoods of the region's districts and cities on the basis of a social selection in July-August 2023. A total of 250 respondents participated in the sociological survey.

The questionnaire was conducted among residents of Yakkatut, Enbek, YukoriChirchik district, Kangli, Obodon, Surankent, Kokmuyin, OrtaChirchik district, Bozsuv, Nazarbek neighborhoods of Zangiota district, Chirchik, Almalyk cities.

The main purpose of the questionnaire is to substantiate theoretical approaches to the study of poverty from the perspective of a sociological approach and to present the main characteristics and regional differences of poverty as an object of sociological analysis. The presented results are based on empirical data from the author's research, which characterize the perception of poverty by different segments of the population, the main characteristics of the poor, and the regional characteristics of poverty in general. The author substantiates the idea that poverty is a complex multidimensional, multifactorial phenomenon that requires a specific comprehensive strategy to reduce it and ideally eliminate it. The problem of poverty cannot be solved only by economic measures or, conversely, by social measures aimed at supporting various categories of the population. It would also be appropriate to identify the geographical factors that cause this problem and scientifically study their impact.

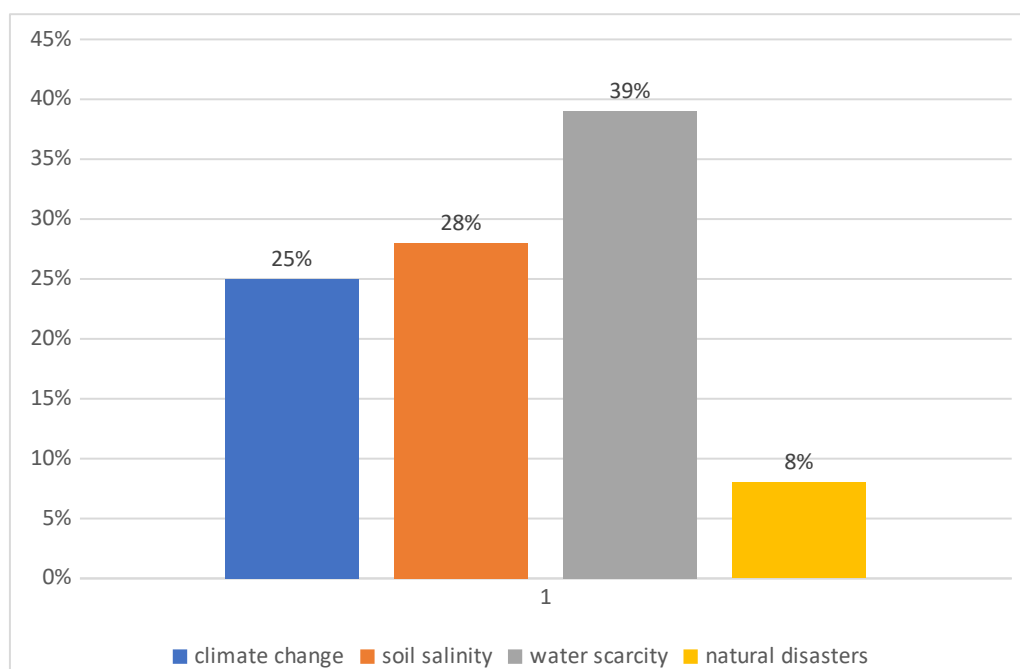
The results of a sociological survey conducted in the regions in order to determine the formation of the urbanization process in the region, the development of production and social infrastructure, the extent to which the vast opportunities created for the population in the regions are being used, the quality of the economic sectors created for the benefit of the population, and to study the level of poverty in the regions and the factors affecting it were as follows.

It is worth noting that in order to identify and study the main factors causing poverty in the regions of the region, in the course of a sociological study by the author, when asked "Determine the main factor causing poverty in the area where you live," 36% of the survey participants answered natural-geographical factors, 30% economic-socio-geographical factors, 30% economic factors, and 4% other factors (Figure 1.)



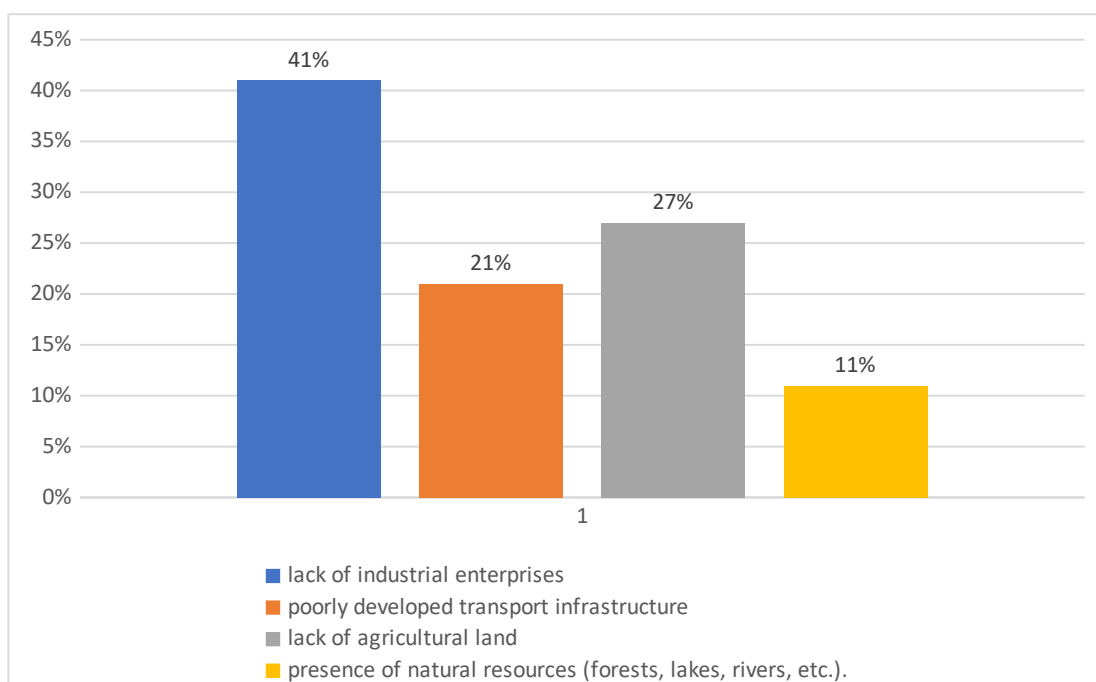
**Figure 1. The results of a sociological survey. The factors causing poverty**

When asked which natural and geographical factors they consider to be the main cause of poverty in the area where they live, 39% of participants answered water scarcity, 28% soil salinity, 25% climate change, and 8% natural disasters (Figure 2.).



**Figure 2. The results of a sociological survey. The natural and geographical factors causing poverty**

According to the results of the research, the main reason why the population identifies the natural and geographical factor as the main factor causing poverty in the regions is the changes in nature, water shortage, soil salinization and natural disasters in recent years. In particular, water shortages are mainly due to the inability of the population engaged in agriculture to harvest crops from the lands that are their source of income or a sharp decline in yields, which is reducing their financial capabilities. This, in turn, is observed in these regions as a gradual increase in the level of poverty. When asked which of the economic and geographical factors they consider to be the main cause of poverty in the region where they live, 41% of the participants answered that the absence or lack of industrial enterprises is the main cause of poverty, 21% are poorly developed transport infrastructure, 27% are the lack of agricultural land, and 11% are the presence of natural resources (forests, lakes, rivers, etc.) (Figure 3.).



**Figure 3. The results of a sociological survey. The economic and geographical factors causing poverty.**

The 41% of respondents said that the most important economic and geographical factor causing poverty in their area is the lack or absence of industrial enterprises. They believe that more industrial enterprises should be established in the districts. Because the more enterprises there are, the more people will be provided with jobs, which will increase their income and, in turn, reduce poverty.

Moreover, the poorly developed transport infrastructure of the local population, the lack of even paved roads in some neighborhoods, and the high cost of transportation reduce the ability of residents to commute to enterprises and organizations located far from where they live. In addition, some respondents noted that factors such as the lack of agricultural land and the lack of natural resources (forests, lakes, rivers, etc.) also cause poverty.

When analyzing the economic and geographical factors that cause poverty, the employment rate of the region's population was as follows. The population with a permanent job was 66.5 percent, the employed population with a seasonal job was 24.5 percent, and those with an informal job and working in other regions of our republic and abroad were 9.0 percent. Many problems occurring in the socio-economic life of the region's population and labor resources sometimes occur

due to the participation of those with an informal job and working in our republic and abroad. The negative aspects of informal labor migration for the region are primarily manifested in the outflow of qualified labor, and on the other hand, it causes a decrease in the interest of the emerging labor resources in improving certain professional skills.

This, in turn, has a negative impact on the quality indicators of labor resources. According to the results of many years of research, in some districts of the Tashkent region, the number of people working in foreign countries is significantly higher than in other regions. In particular, the fact that the region borders the neighboring state of Kazakhstan serves as the main reason for this. This, of course, has a positive effect on reducing poverty among the population in the regions. However, the constant work of qualified personnel in other countries creates a personnel problem in the regions.

The results of research conducted on the regional labor market show that local labor resources are often less competitive in terms of their quality. However, the current market relations that are being formed, due to the increasing demand for qualified workers, the rapid obsolescence of the content of professions and qualifications, and the formation of a continuous education system, necessitate regular enrichment of knowledge. This situation indicates the need to increasingly satisfy the needs of the oasis labor resources for knowledge. The current situation in this regard was clearly reflected in the sociological study conducted by our research. According to the analysis of the study, it became clear that the need for education in the region is growing.

As mentioned above, the internal potential of the region is not yet fully utilized in the work to increase the employment of the population and improve their income. To be more precise, the development of some types of entrepreneurship, based on local conditions, is not being paid attention to by the khokimiyats. As a result, those who want to engage in this type of activity face various difficulties, and a feeling of distrust arises towards them. This is observed in those who want to organize farms, conduct business in the fields of local crafts,

healthcare, industry and services, and they face certain difficulties in registering with the relevant organizations, obtaining land, buildings and structures, as well as funds from financial sources.

The situation in Tashkent region is also clearly reflected in socio-demographic surveys conducted by the author among the population. For example, according to the results of a survey conducted in 2023, 25.6% of respondents admitted that it is difficult to formalize entrepreneurship, and 39.4% - to obtain funds, while the rest noted the high level of unjustified interference in entrepreneurial activity. The 15.3% of those surveyed were previously engaged in entrepreneurial activity and abandoned it for certain reasons. It is known that in the commercial intermediary (trade - sale) type of entrepreneurship, due to the high turnover of funds, expenses are recouped in a short time. In addition, it is possible to start work at your own pace, without receiving money from the state.

Therefore, in the studied region, as in most regions of the republic, there is a majority of those who want to engage in this type of entrepreneurship.

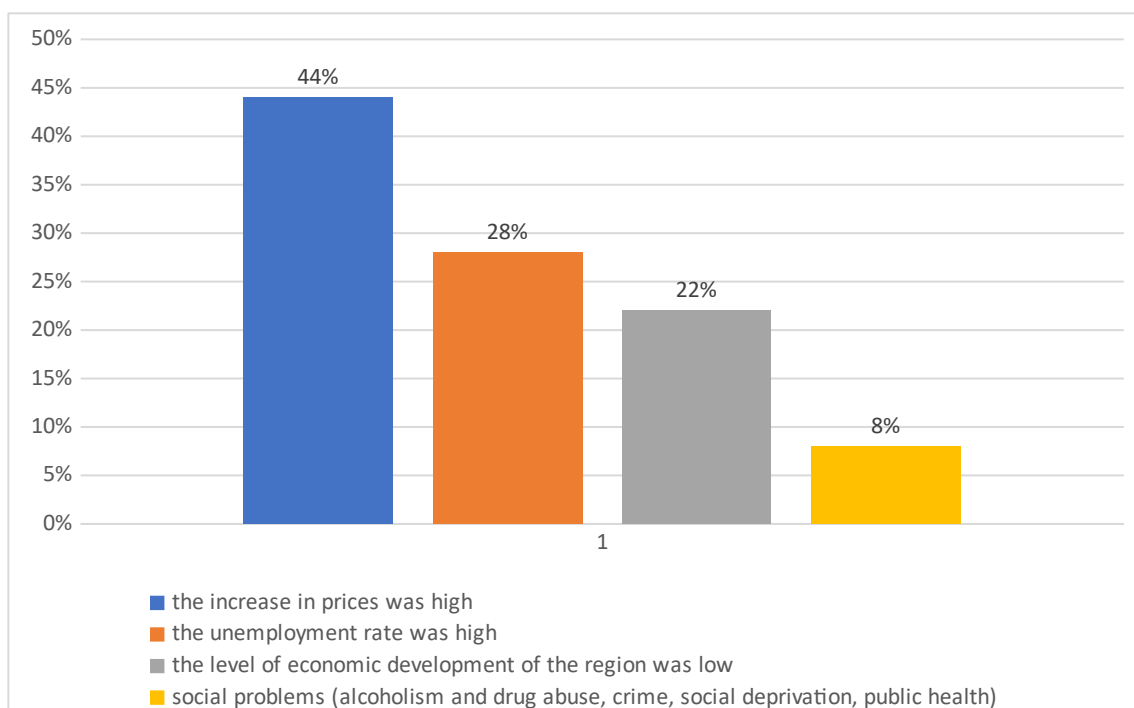
Based on the natural, socio-economic conditions of the region and the sectoral structure of employment, the majority (32.6%) of those who want to run their own farm. At the same time, relatively few people are interested in doing business in the industrial, household goods production and construction sectors. Since almost half of the region's population lives in cities, they expressed a desire to engage in formal and informal service sectors.

Young people interested in tourism, one of the most profitable industries in many countries of the world, formed the majority. Although, the region has many tourist attractions and recreational tourism destinations with unique natural and climatic conditions, we can see that there are an extremely large number of people who want to engage in this type of entrepreneurship.

The results of the study indicate that in relatively developed regions, the majority of respondents prefer to conduct entrepreneurial activities related to trade and commercial production. These include district centers, as well as cities and towns.



When asked which socio-economic factors they consider to be the main cause of poverty in the region where they live, 44% of the participants answered that the increase in prices was high, 28% said that the unemployment rate was high, 22% said that the level of economic development of the region was low, and 8% said that social problems (alcoholism and drug abuse, crime, social deprivation, public health) were the main causes of poverty in the region (Figure 4.).



**Figure 4. The results of a sociological survey. The socio-economic factors causing poverty**

The survey results show that most respondents noted the increase in prices, i.e. high inflation, as the main economic factor of poverty in the regions. The main reasons for this were the following:

- the low level of development of industrial enterprises in the regions;
- the lack of an approach to the location of production and service facilities in rural areas, taking into account population density and service area;
- the poor functioning of mechanisms for increasing the export potential of local enterprises and their stimulation;

- the low volume of agricultural production of local farmers and peasant farms to prevent food price increases;
- the low level of stimulation of small businesses and family entrepreneurship, taking into account their work to reduce the price level;
- the lack of incentives for electricity, gas, water and utility bills, which leads to an increase in the cost of manufactured products, construction work and services;
- the small amount of long-term preferential loans for the construction and repair of enterprises;
- the lack of a rational approach to determining patent fees by tax inspectorates;

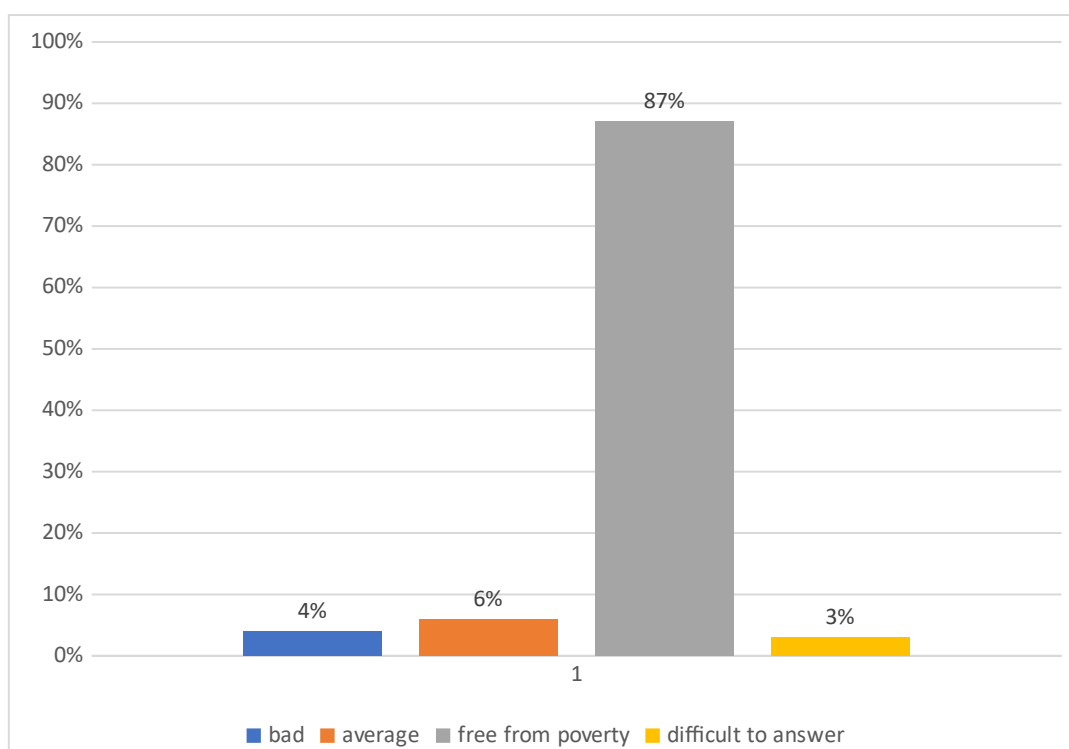
We believe that the implementation of the above conclusions and proposals would have made a significant contribution to the development of all sectors of the economy in our republic and the Tashkent region. This would have significantly reduced inflation in the regions and thereby increased the incomes of the population and prevented them from falling into poverty.

To the question “What level of poverty do you consider your family to be?”, 4% answered “bad”, 6% “average”, 87% said our family is free from poverty, and 3% said it was difficult to answer (Figure 4.).

When asked what they would do if their family’s financial situation worsened, the residents of the region indicated that they preferred to use the following constructive strategies:

- we will look for an additional source of income (31.0%);
- we will try to get a higher-paying job (12.0%);
- we will try to earn money in any way (1.8%);
- we will activate a personal subsidiary farm (17.2%);
- we will engage in family entrepreneurship (18.0%);
- we will go to work abroad (10.0%);
- we do not know what to do (10.0%).

Approximately 10 percent of respondents to the survey said they did not know what to do if their family's financial situation worsened.

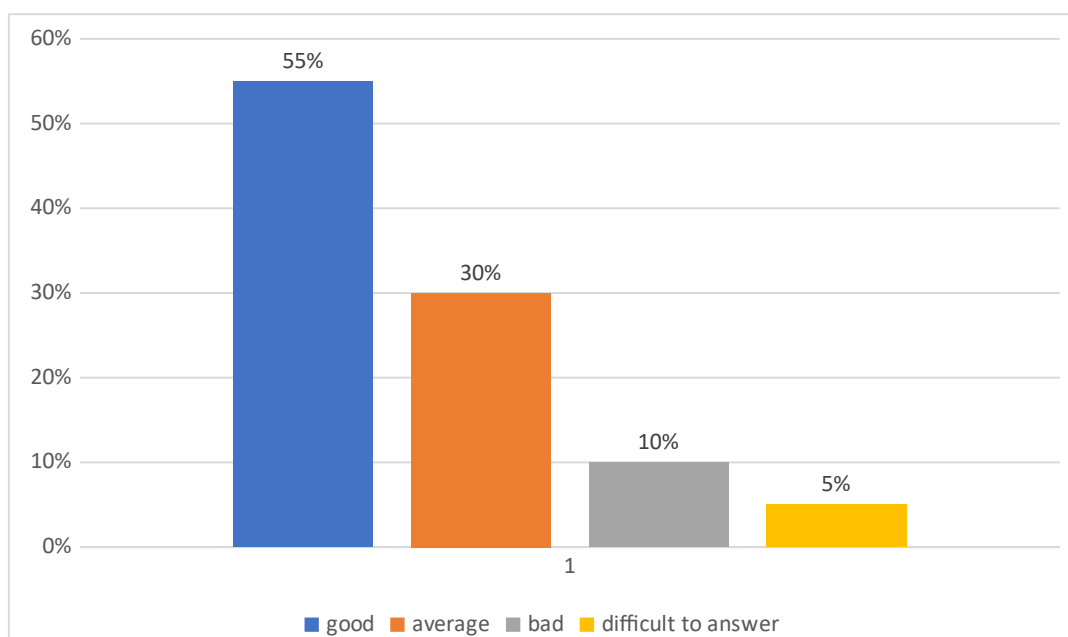


**Figure 4. The results of a sociological survey. The level of poverty in the region**

According to the results of a quantitative research conducted with the help of local government bodies in the studied area, the absolute majority of respondents (80.3%) recognize the existence of a poverty problem in the settlements where they live.

According to the results of the research, it can be seen that the poverty level in the cities and towns of the region is somewhat lower than in rural settlements. The main reasons for this can be attributed to the large number of economic entities in cities, well-developed infrastructure, and the relatively high cost of real estate (housing stock, land plots).

When asked the question “How do you assess the work aimed at reducing poverty in the area where you live?”, 55% of the survey participants said it was good, 30% average, 10% bad, and 5% of the population said it was difficult to answer this question (Figure 5.).



**Figure 5. The results of a sociological survey. The work aimed at reducing poverty in the region**

The results of the research showed that 10% of respondents note the ineffectiveness of the work being carried out in the regions to reduce poverty. According to the population of the region, measures to eliminate and prevent poverty in the region are also ineffective. However, the subjective assessment of the respondents' presented measures allows us to draw the following conclusions. According to the respondents, the most effective measure is to increase the targeting of material assistance only to those in real need. In second place is an increase in social benefits for all privileged categories of citizens, and in third place is the creation of specialized state charitable funds. They also emphasized the gradual increase in pensions.

The majority of respondents also suggested accelerating the implementation of such measures as the economical use of water resources in agriculture, improving the land reclamation condition, increasing the use of local fertilizers, combating wind and water erosion, and taking into account the level of poverty in the regions when deploying production forces.

Taking everything into consideration, the subjective assessment of the respondents reflects the ineffectiveness of the measures taken to reduce poverty.

In conclusion, it can be said that when the opinions of those who participated in the sociological survey on the state of poverty in the region, the possibilities for its reduction, and the employment of the population were studied, a large part of the population responded negatively to the state of measures aimed at reducing poverty in the regions. This indicates the need for a scientific analysis of poverty in the region and further improvement of the possibilities for reducing the problem of poverty in the regions.

It should be noted that there are many areas where entrepreneurial activity can be carried out in the districts, and at the same time, there are many people who want to become entrepreneurs. If they are assisted by local governments and relevant organizations, and their initiatives are supported, thousands of new jobs can be created. For example, creating various tax incentives for entrepreneurial activity, supporting it with preferential loans from banks will create new jobs not only in the region but also throughout the republic, thereby reducing unemployment, and ultimately achieving the goals of socio-economic development.

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