

# Primary Education System in Turkestan at The End of The 19Th – Early 20Th Centuries (Comparative Analysis of Jadid and Rus-Tuzem Schools)

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## Abstract

In this article, certain information is provided through the analysis of literature concerning the education and upbringing system in Turkestan at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, as well as the comparative study of Jadid schools and Russian-native schools. In addition, sufficient opinions and reflections are presented regarding issues of upbringing within the primary education system.

**Keywords:** Education, Upbringing, Jadid Schools, Russian-Native Schools, Teaching Methods, Educational Literature, Textbooks, Regulation

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, bold steps have been taken toward fundamentally reforming education and upbringing and establishing the foundations of modern development based on the harmony of national and universal values. In particular, addressing issues related to the development of primary education and implementing it on a new basis require the study of rich historical experience in this field. During the Soviet rule, educational institutions from the era of our ancestors were unjustifiably condemned as symbols of ignorance and backwardness, and as centers of religious superstition [1]. It is true that, during the emirate period, the education system in Bukhara experienced stagnation and lagged behind the demands of the time. However, there were also aspects of historical education and upbringing that could serve as valuable examples. The inseparable connection between the processes of education and upbringing, their significance in shaping an individual's ideological resilience, and their role in the stable development of society are indisputable. However, portraying past realities uniformly in a negative light undermines the traditional educational system [2].

## 2. Research Method

The primary method employed in this study was historical-pedagogical analysis. In particular, historical materials were used to analyse the development of basic education in the Bukhara Emirate at the close of the 19th and the start of the 20th centuries, as well as its

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conventional features and function in social life. Archival records as well as the writings and research of modern thinkers and educators, like Sadriddin Ayni and A. Avloniy, were compared throughout the investigation [3]. The one-sided methods used in academic publications from the Soviet era were analysed severely and their consistency with historical accuracy assessed. Furthermore, ideas that are pushed in contemporary pedagogy, like the unity of national and international values and the inseparability of the educational process, were understood in relation to the historical experience being studied. To get scientific results, a methodical approach, source classification, and substantive analysis were used [4].

### 3. Result and Discussion

The issue of education and upbringing is considered one of the most important principles for advancing educational development at each historical stage, ensuring the harmony between traditional education and modernity, and studying past experiences to draw relevant conclusions. In particular, at the end of the 19th century and during the first decade of the 20th century, reforming and modernizing the traditional education system was seen as a means to overcome fragmentation and backwardness [5]. Studying the issues of education and upbringing at various historical stages of Uzbek statehood has always been one of the interesting topics in the field of pedagogy. After the Russian Empire established Turkestan as a protectorate and semi-colony (1865–1873), the region became a raw material base and a market for selling industrial products of the empire. Russian settlements and cities began to emerge in Central Asia. With the introduction of European culture, interest in education and upbringing issues in the emirate increased [6].

For centuries, primary education was provided in schools attached to mosques. The history of such schools dates back to the early 8th century. In Central Asia, with the introduction of Islam and the construction of mosques and madrasas, Muslim schools were established. The word “maktab” is derived from the Arabic verb “kataba”, meaning “to write”, and refers to a “place where one is taught to write” [7]; in some cases, the term “maktab” also meant “school for mirzas (noble children)”. A maktab served as an institution for Muslims to acquire literacy and learn religious practices in mosques. This traditional education system was established in Central Asia after the Arab Caliphate conquered the region, replacing the Zoroastrian “dabiristons” [8].

In Central Asia, traditional education consisted of two levels: the lower level, which was primary school, and the higher level, which was the madrasa. This system divided schools into those funded by the state and those operating on the resources of private individuals and waqf (endowment) properties [9]. Primary education institutions were referred to in sources as “maktabxonalar” and were present in almost all large villages. Since most of these schools consisted of a single room, they were called “maktabxona”. According to Muslim customs, boys and girls attended classrooms that were mostly located near mosques, madrasas, or qorikhons, or in the homes of private teachers. Girls’ schools were organized in the homes of otin women or in the homes of wealthy families for their school-aged daughters.

According to Sadriddin Ayni, the appearance of a maktabxona in Bukhara was as follows: “The school consisted of a single room (hujra) with two doors; one of them was a single-leaf door that usually remained closed. The second door was a small window-like door, measuring three gaz in height (1 gaz = 62–64 cm) and half a gaz in width. In front of this small door was the place where the domla (teacher) would sit”. The small doors were covered with curtains (the windows were covered with paper) and treated with linseed oil to protect the

paper from snow and rain. Moreover, no light entered the classroom through the school's window. Even though there were two small openings near the ceiling on opposite sides of the room, the light that entered from them did not reach the floor and remained on the walls of the hujra. The hujra measured sixteen gaz square, and inside it, four beams were laid across each other, dividing the room into nine sections, as if eight small stalls had appeared within the maktabxona. In the stall in front of the door, the children's shoes were kept; in the stall in front of the small door sat the domla, and in the remaining seven stalls, the children would sit" [10]. Sadriddin Ayni noted that while studying in one of these old schools, students had to lift the lessons written by the teacher on a small board over their heads and loudly repeat them in the classroom.

It is stated in the 1909 work "Discussion of a European and a Bukhara Teacher on Jadid Schools in India" that students received two lessons daily from the teacher accompanied by beatings and insults, and no one cared whether the lesson was properly understood or mastered. He wrote, "The room where the students sat was dimly lit, resembling a storage space or a place where animals lived" [11]. Of course, there is some exaggeration in his account; however, in reality, by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, attention to the schools attached to mosques had indeed diminished.

Before the Russian Empire's invasion, Turkestan had a widespread network of public educational centers, including schools and madrasas. The invaders, upon observing their activities, realized that these schools and madrasas posed a significant threat to the future of colonial rule. For this reason, the Tsarist administration began its Russification policy in the region precisely through this sphere and developed a specific program for it. The politician K.P. Kaufman, who was particularly skilled in implementing such policies, worked with great dedication in this area.

In 1880, when the Imperial State Council discussed the issue of educating the local children of Turkestan together with Russian children, it was emphasized that the people of Turkestan were "rigid in trade and agriculture and of a docile nature", and it was noted that they "stood out sharply from other Muslims in the empire".

This decision of the State Council was supported by Kaufman. He raised the issue of "educating Russian and native children together" and considered the separation of Muslim and Russian schools to be economically and politically harmful. Subsequent governors continued to promote this idea. In 1884, the first Russian-native school was opened in Tashkent, and by the end of the 19th century, their number had exceeded one hundred [12].

Despite the colonial and coercive policies of the Russian Empire aimed at keeping the local population of Turkestan in darkness and subjugation, the development of national education, science, and culture in the region did not come to a complete halt at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. However, even in this matter, during the Soviet era, local scholars, influenced by communist ideology and shaped by a worldview of ignorance and servitude, exaggerated and praised the policies in the fields of education, science, and culture carried out during the Tsarist period, while belittling the actual state of affairs in the region before the Russian invasion.

They claimed that in 1897, the literate population in the region consisted of 1.6% Uzbeks, 1% Kazakhs, 0.7% Turkmens, and 0.6% Kyrgyz, and that literacy did not increase in the following years, asserting that 98 out of every 100 people in Uzbekistan were illiterate. They propagated statements such as: "The peoples of Central Asia were almost entirely illiterate before the revolution. In 1897, only 1.9% of Uzbeks could read and sign their names.

According to the 1897 All-Russian census, the literate population in the region was 1.8%, meaning that before the revolution, Turkestan was almost entirely illiterate. “The Uzbek people were nearly universally illiterate, with literacy not exceeding 1.5–2%” [13].

Some scholars even glorify merchants like Saidzimboy, who betrayed their homeland and people by siding with the invading Russian rulers, claiming that he opened a Russian-native school in his house in Tashkent. In reality, however, Russian-native schools were primarily established to train interpreters and translators.

However, during the Soviet era, impartial studies refuting such claims were also published. The historian Pyotr Geronovich Kim, in his article “Fiction and Reality”, posed a legitimate question to the so-called “scholars” from our own ranks:

So, how did an “illiterate” people manage to build architectural masterpieces such as the Gur-i Amir, Shah-i Zinda, Bibi-Khanym in Samarkand, Bukhara, Khorezm, Tashkent, and Khiva, along with many other monuments? How did an “illiterate” people produce world-renowned scholars like Ibn Sina, Al-Khwarizmi, and Al-Biruni? What is the secret behind an “illiterate” people making their mark on the world through poets and thinkers such as Navoi, Ulughbek, Farabi, Jami, and many others? Can one truly believe that a people with thousands of enlighteners like Furqat, Muqimi, A. Avloniy, and M. Behbudiy were illiterate?

P.G. Kim exposed such illogical and untenable claims with undeniable evidence in his article. He wrote:

“Now, based on the facts presented in the sources, if we examine the number of schools and students in Russia, Belarus, and Turkestan in 1897, the level of literacy in these regions becomes clear.

In Russia, the total population was 126,388,800, the number of schools was 33,401, and the number of students was 2,318,100, which accounted for 1.8% of the total population, with an overall literacy rate of 21%. In Belarus, the total population was 6,492,857, the number of schools was 2,263, and the number of students was 125,418, accounting for 1.9% of the population, with a literacy rate of 24.7%. In Turkestan, the total population was 3,792,774, the number of schools was 6,027, and the number of students was 64,015, accounting for 1.7% of the population, with a literacy rate of 19.55%” [14].

Primary schools existed in the Old City of Bukhara, other cities, and villages, with each of the 22 districts (guzars) of Bukhara having its own school. According to Sharia law, it was considered an unforgivable sin to refuse anyone who came to seek knowledge. Regardless of a child’s social class or ability to pay for education, teachers were obligated to instruct them without objection. This was based on the Hadith, which considered that “every Muslim’s pursuit of knowledge is both a duty and an obligation” [15].

#### 4. Conclusion

In summary, the roots of the education and upbringing system in Turkestan extend back many centuries. Throughout history, the region, particularly Bukhara, has been renowned in both the Eastern and Western worlds for its scholars and religious as well as secular centers of learning. In Bukhara, the primary education system was organized in accordance with the demands of the time, ensuring that children acquired literacy and were prepared to progress to higher levels of schooling.

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