

Discussion of the Issue of Women's Place and Role in Society in Jadid Press and Works

Rakhimov Bektosh Elmurodovich

Associate professor of Samarkand State University named after Sharaf Rashidov

Pirmamatov Ramziddin Husniddinovich

Master's student of Samarkand State University named after Sharaf Rashidov

Abstract

This article analyzes women and women their place and role in society in the literature of the Jadid movement in Turkestan at the beginning of the XXth century. Starting with identifying Jadidism as a reformist intellectual movement that sought social change by means of literate practices such as the press and literature and the efforts to educate women and engage them into society, Although the literary history of Jadidism has generated increasing academic curiosity, we still do not have a systematic study of media through which women's questions were treated during this period. In response, the research uses historical and textual analysis of qualitative primary sources, including newspapers and journals, and other literary works of key Jadid figures, such as Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, and Abdulhamid Cho'lpon, and relevant historiographical literature.

The results indicate that the Jadid thinkers persuasively and repetitively identified women literacy, moral education and social activities with necessity of national advancement and cultural revival. Not just a critique of the ills of tradition and social stagnation but more so, a blueprint to initiate tangible change, in the forms of new-method schools and the spread of notions via periodicals, characterises their writing. And the findings show that the women discourse was integral in the Jadid reform ideology rather than ancillary to it, as a primary engine of social modernization.

Such reformist narratives of gender, the study suggests, were archetypes, reconstructing the politics of gender and education in insightfully influential ways even in the following two decades in the region. It emphasizes the role of mind and media in reforming the mindset of society. A comparative dimension with other Muslim reform movements would be equally relevant, and future research should consider the long-term legacy of Jadid ideas on women's contemporary situation in Central Asia.

Keywords: Jadidism, Turkestan, women's role, women's education, press, social reform.

1. Introduction

Representatives of the Jadid movement, as members of a modern-minded intellectual stratum, clearly understood the powerful influence of the press and literature, as well as their unparalleled importance as instruments for mobilizing the population, and they were actively engaged in these fields.

*Corresponding author : -

Article history : submitted; 2026/01/15 revised; 2026/02/23 accepted; 2026/03/10, published; 2026/04/07

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Jadid movement became fully developed in many respects. “Usul-i savtiya” (phonetic method) schools increased in number, and Jadid press, literature, and theater emerged as influential platforms [1].

In the period following the 1905 Revolution, the national press came into existence, and a number of new publications began to appear. Between 1905 and 1917, 22 newspapers and 8 journals were published in Turkestan. Among them were *Taraqqiyy* (1906–1907, Tashkent, editor Ismoil Obidov), *Xurshid* (1906–1907, Tashkent, editor Munavvarqori), *Shuhrat* (1907–1908, Tashkent, editor Abdulla Avloniy), *Osiyo* (1908, Tashkent, editor Ahmadjon Bektemirov), *Buxoroi Sharif* (1912–1913, in Tajik, Bukhara, editor Mirzo Jalol Yusufzoda, publisher Mirbadalov), *Turon* (1912, Bukhara, editor Mirbadalov), *Samarqand* (1914, Samarkand, editor Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy), *Sadoi Farg‘ona* (1914–1915, Kokand, editor Ashurali Zohiriy, publisher Obidjon Mahmud), and *Sadoi Turkiston* (1914–1915, Tashkent, editors Munavvarqori and Ubaydulla Xo‘ja). However, this did not yet indicate the complete triumph of Jadidism across all regions. For example, the situation in Bukhara and the scope of Jadid activity there remained highly complex due not only to the emir’s policies opposing any form of progress and innovation, but also to resistance from religious leaders [2].

2. Research Method

The research method of this study consists of qualitative historical and textual analysis of both primary and secondary sources pertaining to the early 20th century Turkestani Jadids. It is premised primarily on content analysis of periodical publications and literary and scholarly works authored by the main Jadid figures such as Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy and Abdulhamid Cho‘lpon [3]. Over a 12-year period, they systematically examined archival newspapers and journals from 1905 to 1917, looking for recurring motifs about women, education, the family, and social reform. Particularly, the discourse strategies followed in these writings in promoting literate women and their role in the society as an active citizen were thoroughly examined. It also drew comparisons to the broader impact of extra-regional intellectual movements (and specifically in the cases at hand from Crimea and Kazan) in shaping local Jadid thought. Selected literary texts and динамика (drama) were also examined in order to show how social criticism of femininity and reformist ideas about women passed into artistic forms [4]. Also, it incorporates historiographical approaches, by clarifying the cultural milieu of Jadidism by summarizing what past academic literature has said (or not said) on Jadidism. The data was thematically coded, with evidence falling into categories like education, family relations, and citizenship. This method of segregating content into sections enabled one to take stock of what patterns emerged from Jadidists conceptualizing women as the central piece to societal progress. This methodology thus guarantees a systematic and in-depth investigation of both the ideological and practical aspects of the Jadid reform movement relating to women [5].

3. Results and Discussion

As noted above, the spread of Jadid ideas in the Turkestan region was strongly influenced by enlightenment ideas circulating within the Russian Empire, as well as in regions such as Crimea and Kazan, where the press served as a key medium of dissemination. In terms of press influence, the bilingual Crimean Tatar–Russian newspaper *Tercüman/Perevodchik* (published from 1883 to 1918) played a significant role in the

formation and development of the local press in Turkestan prior to the Soviet period. The Crimean Tatar enlightener Ismail Gaspirinsky founded the first women's magazine, *Alem-i Nisvan* ("The World of Women"), in 1906 and appointed his daughter Shefika Khanum as its editor. In addition, the journal *Suyum Bike*, published in Kazan between 1913 and 1917, also served as a platform striving to define women's place in society [6]. Tatar intellectuals who were familiar with the educational system of Russian schools sought to establish "New Method" (*Usul-i Jadid*) schools in their native languages. In doing so, they used the press to highlight the differences between the "Usul-i Jadid" and the traditional "Usul-i Qadim" schools [7].

Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy, regarded as the father of the Turkestan Jadids, played an active role in elucidating the essence of the Jadid movement and in addressing social issues through literature, the press, and theater, promoting education and discussing the role of women in society. Having received madrasa education first in Samarkand and later in Bukhara, Behbudiy became acquainted during his studies with publications of Ismail Gaspirinsky's newspaper *Tarjimon* [8]. In 1903, he visited the villages of Halvoyi and Rajab Amin near Samarkand and, in cooperation with local intellectuals, established new-method schools. For these schools, he authored a number of textbooks, including *Risolai asbobi savod* (1904), *Risolai jug'rofiyai umroniy* (1905), *Risolai jug'rofiyai Rusiy* (1905), *Kitob atul-afol* (1908), *Amaliyoti islom* (1908), and *Tarixi islom* (1909) [9].

In 1913, Behbudiy founded the newspaper *Samarqand* and later the journal *Oyina* (published between 1913 and 1915), and he directed their activities [10]. Through periodical press and literature, central themes in Behbudiy's views included the promotion of education, the discussion of marriage and family relations, and the necessity of equipping women with education and upbringing. His famous drama *Padarkush* (1911) critically depicted the social ills of Turkestan society, including ignorance and backwardness. Furthermore, in his article titled "A School for Muslim Women," published in the newspaper *Samarqand* [11], Behbudiy offered an in-depth discussion of the issue of women's literacy.

Among the articles published in the renowned journal *Oyina* of that period, works such as "Padarkush", "Oq yelpog'ichli chinli xotun", "Sayohat Xotiralari", "Jaholat dardlaridan", "Ikki emas to'rt til lozim", "Bizni hollar va ishlar ishlar" were devoted to the above-mentioned issues.

The article titled "Hifzi sihhati oila" (Preservation of Family Health), published in issue No. 47 of *Oyina* on September 17, 1914, is also significant in this regard. In its section "The Necessity of Marriage", the following is stated:

"Marriage is natural for human beings. It is impossible for a person to live alone without marrying. Every man and woman is in need of mutual support, assistance, and cohabitation. If a man and a woman do not establish a household through lawful (*shar'i*) marriage, a disruption will occur in human society and in the sphere of civilization, leading to decline and destruction. Therefore, it is essential for every young man and woman to marry in accordance with the prescriptions of religious law and health sciences, to consider establishing a family as their primary goal, and to learn and fulfill the moral and practical requirements prescribed by both religion and hygiene for married life. If one fails to follow these prescriptions, one will face consequences both in this world, by nature, and in the hereafter, by the Creator of nature." [12]

From the content of this text, it is evident that Behbudiy elaborates on the structure of the family and the roles and responsibilities of husband and wife.

In issue No. 48 of the journal, published on September 20, 1914, another part of the “Hifzi sihhati oila” series titled “The Upbringing of Girls” states:

“Once a girl reaches the age of 11–12, she approaches physical maturity and begins menstruation. While boys typically encounter certain physical urges at the age of 15–16, girls experience such conditions earlier, around 12–13. Mothers and educators must guide girls through this period with great care, ensuring that both their physical and moral upbringing align with the principles of health and religious prescriptions. During this time, girls should be protected from activities and foods that weaken the body and should be provided with warm clothing. Physicians also recommend binding the waist. It is medically and morally inappropriate for such girls to attend weddings and gatherings, or to associate with morally questionable women (and they must certainly avoid close interaction with boys). By the age of 16–17, girls reach the time suitable for marriage. In order to preserve their natural development, further precautions are necessary. They should not be allowed to spend time reading or listening to romantic stories; instead, measures should be taken to ensure their modesty and physical upbringing. In particular, interaction with immoral or careless women must be prevented.”

This article also reflects Behbudiy’s views on women’s upbringing and family life.

Mahmudxo’ja Behbudiy, in his work *Sayohat xotiralari*, also addressed the issue of women, noting: “In our region, the condition of our women is in urgent need of serious consideration.” He emphasized that in order to resolve these problems, women themselves must strive to defend their rights [13].

In his articles, including one titled “Feuilleton”, Behbudiy, while evaluating the difficult socio-economic conditions of Turkestan, expressed the following view: “If we do not firmly defend our own interests, it is likely that within the next twenty years we will be further oppressed, because by violating the freedom of the mothers of our nation, we are ourselves drying up the roots of our nation.”

The scholarly research of the prominent historian Begali Qosimov, who extensively studied the Jadid movement, is also of great importance. According to his findings, Jadid representatives made significant efforts to improve the situation of women by establishing new schools and libraries, as well as by seeking financial resources to support these initiatives. One such method was fundraising through theatrical performances. For example, it was reported in the newspaper *Sadoi Turkiston* that a performance of *Padarkush* staged in Andijan in early 1914 generated 1,500 rubles, 20 percent of which was allocated to the construction of a new girls’ gymnasium in the city.

Abdulla Avloniy, one of the prominent representatives of the Jadid intelligentsia, also reflected on the socio-economic changes taking place in Turkestan in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries and sought to explain the causes of stagnation in the region. Encouraging women to become educated and acquire professional skills, Avloniy wrote: “Questions arise: ‘Who is responsible for education? Where does it take place?’ To these questions, we may respond: ‘First, education within the home—this is the duty of the mother. Second, education in schools and madrasas—this is the responsibility of the father, the teacher, the instructor, and the state.’ However, one might object: ‘Which mothers do you mean? Illiterate mothers, with disheveled hair and rough hands? How can they provide an education that they themselves do not possess?’ [14]

This passage reflects Avloniy's critical perspective on the necessity of educating women, emphasizing that the effectiveness of upbringing and social progress depends significantly on the educational level of mothers.

Abdulhamid Cho'lpon, regarded as one of the youngest representatives of the Turkestan Jadids, also authored a number of works addressing issues related to women, family, and marriage. For instance, in his stories such as "Oydin kechalarda," "Qurboni jaholat," "Qor qo'ynida lola," "Oq podshoning in'omi," and "Novvoy qiz," as well as in his well-known stage work "Yorqinoy," Cho'lpon sharply criticizes the social condition of women in Turkestan [15].

The text shows that Jadid thinkers played an important role in raising awareness about women's place in society. Through newspapers, literature, and education, they encouraged people to rethink old traditions and support women's education and active participation in social life. Overall, they saw improving women's status as a key step toward the progress and development of society.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion shows that the use of print, literature and education in the hands of the Jadid movement was instrumental in imagining and redefining the place of women in early 20th century Turkestan. The results show that Jadid intellectuals consistently cited women's education, literacy, and moral upbringing as necessary preconditions of social change on a larger scale, making the status of women a central part of the interplay between the family, the nation and cultural renewal. To this end, writers like Behbudiy, Avloniy, and Cho'lpon leveraged newspapers, journals, and literary productions to not only condemn existing limits but also outline specific routes towards reform — such as the establishment of new-method schools and promotion of progressive ideals of family life. This suggests that the Jadid conversation surrounding women were not either-or statements, but an integral part of a broader modernization project, which also highlights ways in which intellectual movements affect societal change through media and education. However, the changes occur alongside stubborn resistance from business and political institutions, suggesting the difficulty involved in enacting this kind of reform. Comparative perspectives with other reform movements in the Muslim world, as well as long-range studies of the influence of Jadid ideas on gender policy and social development in the post-Soviet period, are also warranted.

5. References

- [1] A. Avloniy, *Tanlangan asarlar*. Tashkent: Manaviyat, 1998.
- [2] R. Sharipov, *Turkiston jadidchilik harakati tarixidan*. Tashkent, 2002.
- [3] A. Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- [4] E. A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2013.
- [5] B. K. Kaldybekovich, "Jadidism as an Educational System and a Political Movement in Turkestan," *Int. Educ. Stud.*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 85–92, 2013.
- [6] M. Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006.
- [7] I. Gasprinskiy, *Rahbari muallimin*. Simferopol, 1898.

- [8] D. Alimova and D. Rashidova, Mahmudxoja Behbudiy va uning tarixiy tafakkuri. Tashkent: Akademiya, 1999.
- [9] D. Alimova, Jadidchilik: islohot, yangilanish. Tashkent, 1999.
- [10] D. Alimova, Jadidchilik fenomeni. Tashkent: Akademnashr, 2012.
- [11] M. Behbudiy, Tanlangan asarlar. Tashkent, 2018.
- [12] M. Behbudiy, Tanlangan asarlar. Tashkent, 1999.
- [13] S. Keller, To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia. Praeger, 2001.
- [14] M. Kamp, "Women's Reform and Education in Central Asia," Cent. Asian Surv., 2001.
- [15] D. Qurbonov, Cholpon nasri poetikasi. Tashkent: Sharq, 2004.