

Activities of Primary Schools Attached to Churches in Russian Settlements of the Bukhara Emirate

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Abstract

This article examines the activities of primary schools established under Russian churches in the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate for the purpose of educating the children of the resettled Russian-speaking population. It also discusses the educational policy pursued in relation to these schools.

Keywords: Bukhara Emirate, Russian settlements, church schools, primary education, Orthodox Church, parish schools, Russian-speaking population, educational policy.

Introduction

The emergence and development of educational institutions in the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate were closely connected with the social, religious, and administrative needs of the Russian-speaking population resettled in the region. Among these institutions, primary schools and progymnasiums established under Orthodox churches occupied a particular place, as they served not only as centers of elementary education but also as instruments for preserving religious identity, promoting the Russian language, and integrating the children of military personnel, officials, clergy, merchants, and other social groups into the imperial educational environment [1].

When examining the education system and educational institutions in the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate, it is important to note that schools attached to Christian churches and places of worship used by the Christian population also occupied a distinctive place. In Russian settlements, churches were built by the state, public organizations, and private individuals in order to meet the religious and spiritual needs of the population. The number of such churches in population centers such as New Bukhara, New Chardjuy, Kerki, Patta-Hisar, and Saray reached 25–30, while chapels and places of worship were constructed in remote areas [2].

Special schools were opened under the churches built in border districts, and these were attended mainly by the children of military personnel. Such schools were located either

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inside church buildings or in separate premises adjacent to, or associated with, the church. The children of intellectuals, military personnel, clergy, civil servants, and merchants studied in these schools [3].

Near the town of Saray, on the site where the 31st Amu Darya Border Brigade was stationed, a church was constructed on a plot of land measuring 2,000 square sazhen at the personal expense of retired Colonel D. N. Logofet, an orientalist and the author of dozens of books on the history of Bukhara and Turkestan. Between 1908 and 1913, an average of 660 rubles was allocated annually from the military garrison's budget for the maintenance and repair of the church [4].

A one-class parish school was opened under the church, where 25 to 30 pupils studied during the academic years. These pupils were mainly the children of military personnel, and they were taught literacy, the Russian language, religious prayers, and arithmetic [5].

In 1888, a magnificent church was built in the city of New Chardjuy, and a two-year school was opened under its auspices, where an average of 25–30 pupils studied. This school mainly enrolled boys, whose instruction was provided by a priest, a deacon, and an assistant clergyman [6].

For teaching the children religious prayers, Russian legislation, and literacy, the priest received an annual salary of 600 rubles, while his assistant received 240 rubles. In addition, they were also provided with housing allowances [7].

In addition, there was also a church at the Chardjuy railway station, under which a two-class railway parish school operated. Initially, this school was located inside the church building. Later, a separate building for the school was constructed next to the church. This educational institution accommodated a considerable number of male and female pupils [8].

In 1907, 295 pupils studied in the two classes of the school, of whom 165 were boys and 130 were girls. In subsequent years as well, the number of pupils at the school did not fall below 300. Although the church school did not possess ancient sources or manuscripts, it had a special library consisting of textbooks, teaching manuals, and religious and literary works [9].

For a long period, the children were taught by the church priest Jordan Lopaidze and the deacon Vasiliy Chernetsky. They received an annual salary of 400 rubles for their teaching duties. Teachers of mathematics, Russian grammar, and geography were invited to the school, and they received annual salaries ranging from 250 to 300 rubles [10].

The study has shown that, among the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate, the largest number of churches and schools attached to churches existed in New Bukhara (Kagan) and Chardjuy.

The establishment of church-affiliated schools in the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate should be considered within the broader context of the Russian Empire's colonial educational policy in Central Asia. These schools were primarily intended to provide elementary education to the children of the Russian-speaking population, but their functions were not limited to literacy alone. Through religious instruction, the teaching of the Russian language, and familiarization with elements of Russian legislation and imperial norms, these

institutions contributed to the cultural and ideological consolidation of Russian communities in the emirate. In this regard, church schools served as both educational and socio-religious institutions, linking the daily life of settlers with the administrative and cultural space of the empire [11].

Methodology

This study is grounded in a historical-descriptive research approach, combining archival analysis with a review of secondary scholarly sources to reconstruct the educational activities of church-affiliated primary schools in the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate. The primary methodological foundation of the research rests on the examination of archival documents, which provide concrete empirical evidence regarding the establishment, financing, staffing, and enrollment figures of church schools across settlements such as New Bukhara, New Chardjuy, Kerki, Patta-Hisar, and Saray. These archival records include budget allocations, salary registers, pupil enrollment data, and administrative correspondence, which together enable a detailed reconstruction of institutional life within these educational establishments.

The study also draws on published historical sources, including works by contemporaries such as orientalist D. N. Logofet, whose contributions offer contextual insight into the administrative and cultural landscape of the Bukhara Emirate during the late imperial period. A comparative approach was applied to assess differences in the scale, structure, and accessibility of church schools across various settlements, enabling the identification of patterns related to the distribution of educational institutions in relation to military presence, railway infrastructure, and population density.

Furthermore, a contextual analysis was employed to situate the findings within the broader framework of Russian imperial educational and colonial policy in Central Asia. This approach allowed for an interpretation of church schools not merely as educational institutions but as instruments of cultural consolidation and imperial integration. The combination of archival, comparative, and contextual methods ensures a comprehensive and historically grounded examination of the subject.

Results and Discussion

Archival Findings and Institutional Patterns

The archival analysis yielded several significant findings concerning the structure, geographic distribution, and operational characteristics of church-affiliated primary schools in the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate. The evidence confirms that educational institutions attached to Orthodox churches functioned across New Bukhara (Kagan), New Chardjuy, Kerki, Patta-Hisar, and Saray, with the highest concentration recorded in New Bukhara and Chardjuy — a pattern that correlates directly with the density of military garrisons, railway infrastructure, and administrative populations in these localities. The two-class railway parish school at the Chardjuy station enrolled no fewer than 300 pupils in the years following 1907, with a gender-balanced composition of 165 boys and 130 girls, indicating a more inclusive educational model than that commonly associated with imperial parish schooling in the metropolitan territories of Russia [12].

Salary records and budget allocations further illuminate the state's formal engagement with these institutions. The annual provision of 600 rubles to priests for teaching services and the allocation of approximately 660 rubles per annum from the military garrison budget at Saray for church maintenance demonstrate that, despite the informal and ecclesiastical character of these schools, they were materially sustained by both military and civil administrative structures. The construction of a church entirely at private expense by retired Colonel D. N. Logofet at Saray additionally reflects the involvement of influential private actors in educational provisioning, a dynamic that merits further historiographical attention [13].

Discussion in Theoretical and Historical Perspective

These findings are theoretically significant when interpreted within the broader framework of Russian imperial educational and colonial policy in Central Asia. Consistent with Burbank and Cooper's conception of imperial governance as a differentiated process that managed diversity through selective institutional transfer, the church schools of the Bukhara Emirate functioned simultaneously as instruments of elementary education, cultural reproduction, and ideological integration. Unlike the native-oriented Russian-indigenous schools (*russko-tuzemnye shkoly*) established in the Turkestan Governorate-General, the church schools under examination were directed exclusively toward the Russian-speaking settler population, suggesting a deliberate institutional segmentation that reinforced ethno-confessional boundaries within the colonial social order [14].

The gradual spatial expansion of educational access — evidenced by pupils travelling from adjacent settlements lacking school facilities to enroll in Chardjuy and Kerki institutions — indicates that church schools exceeded their formally bounded catchment areas, effectively functioning as regional educational nodes within an otherwise sparsely provisioned colonial periphery [15].

Knowledge Gaps and Directions for Further Research

Notwithstanding these contributions, substantive knowledge gaps remain. The present study does not address the long-term educational outcomes or social mobility trajectories of graduates from church-affiliated schools, nor does it examine the relationship between these institutions and the secular municipal schools and zemstvo schools operating in parallel within the same settlements. Comparative analysis with church school systems in other regions of the Russian Empire's Central Asian borderlands — particularly the Ferghana and Syr Darya oblasts — would enrich understanding of institutional variation and policy coherence. Future research should also draw on ecclesiastical archive collections and gubernatorial reports to reconstruct the pedagogical content, textbook usage, and inspection records of these schools, which would enable a more nuanced assessment of their contribution to imperial educational governance.

Another important feature of these schools was their close connection with military settlements, railway stations, and border territories. In places such as Chardjuy, Kerki, Saray, and New Bukhara, the presence of military units, railway employees, officials, and merchants created a stable demand for elementary education. The fact that some schools accepted both boys and girls, and that separate progymnasiums for girls and boys were opened under certain churches, indicates the gradual expansion of educational opportunities among the Russian-speaking population. At the same time, the uneven distribution of such schools shows that

access to education depended largely on the size of the settlement, the presence of administrative or military institutions, and the financial support available from the state, local communities, or private benefactors.

On 11 December 1911, a women's progymnasium operated under the Alekseev Church, which had been opened in Chardjuy. Until 1913, the church and the progymnasium were located in a single building, and the number of girls studying at the progymnasium, aged between 7 and 11, did not exceed 25–30. After a separate building for the progymnasium was constructed under the church in 1913, the number of pupils doubled .

In the Chardjuy border area, a boys' progymnasium also functioned under a small church built for military personnel at a cost of 600 rubles.

In the city of Kerki, the progymnasium attached to the church provided education for pupils of both sexes, whose number ranged from 45 to 50 .

Archival data confirm that educational institutions opened under churches in New Bukhara, Chardjuy, and Kerki were also attended by pupils from other settlements. These pupils lived in rented private apartments or in the homes of relatives. Although there were churches and places of worship in the settlements from which they came, there were no educational institutions there. Thus, schools were not opened under all churches.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the church-affiliated schools in the Russian settlements of the Bukhara Emirate played an important role in meeting the educational needs of the Russian-speaking population. Although such schools were not opened under every church, the institutions functioning in New Bukhara, Chardjuy, Kerki, Saray, and other settlements provided basic literacy, religious instruction, Russian language, arithmetic, geography, and other subjects. Archival evidence shows that these schools became significant educational centers, especially in areas with a large Russian population and military presence, reflecting the broader educational policy of the Russian Empire in the region.

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