



Views of Turkestan Jadids on Women's Health

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Abstract

The Jadid movement that emerged in Turkestan at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was significant not only as an enlightenment movement but also as a socio-political movement aimed at reforming various aspects of public life. As the Jadids advocated for the construction of an all-round progressive society in their programs, they paid special attention to the issue of women. In particular, questions of women's health, family upbringing, sanitation, and hygiene occupied an important place in the Jadid press and their programmatic views. This article analyzes the social views of Turkestan Jadids directed toward improving women's health on the basis of historical sources.

Keywords: Jadidism, program, press, women, health, disease, upbringing, family, medical institution, local rulers.

Introduction

The representatives of the Jadid movement – a socio-political and enlightenment movement in Turkestan at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century – developed their programs with the aim of reforming various spheres of public life. National intellectuals included in their programs ideas such as eliminating the superstitions that had become embedded in the rules of Islamic Sharia, reforming schools and madrasas, organizing new-method schools, and sending gifted youth abroad for education, alongside the issue of women. The Jadids expressed their views on the education, upbringing, health, and social status of women in the pages of the press. In their view, social progress was inextricably linked with raising a healthy family and a well-rounded generation. For this reason, national intellectuals, through the press, urged their contemporaries to pay serious attention to children's health from birth, to carefully raise girls, and to increase mothers' medical literacy. The Jadids' views on women's health, child upbringing, and hygiene standards are considered important both for their own era and for the present day. The article draws on the press articles and works of Turkestan Jadids such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Haji Muin Shukrullo, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Vadud Mahmud. The Jadids particularly emphasized that women, as the bearers of a healthy generation, need to be protected and their health treated with special care, precisely because of their delicate nature.[1][2][3][4]

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Research Method

In studying and illuminating the views on women's health, education, and upbringing raised by the Jadids in the press and their works at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the methods of synthesis, comprehensive approach, systematic approach, and comparative analysis were employed.[5]

Results and Discussion

Results. In their works and articles, the national enlighteners emphasized the importance of paying serious attention to girls' upbringing and health from birth. The father of Turkestan Jadidism, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi (1875 – 1919), published his article entitled “Hifzi Sihhat-i Oila” (Family Health) in certain issues of the journal “Oyina,” published from August 20, 1913, to June 15, 1915, dedicated to family matters.[6] He also expressed his views on girls' health in the article. Mahmudkhoja Behbudi stressed that girls should be raised carefully from birth in accordance with Sharia rules, that their health must be given due attention, and that at the ages of 11 – 12, at the onset of puberty, they should be protected from work and foods that weaken their bodies. Abdurauf Fitrat, in his work “Oila yoki oila boshqarish tartiblari” (The Family, or the Rules of Family Management), also emphasized that an important part of upbringing – before a child reaches the age of seven – falls primarily on the parents and that both husband and wife must provide their children, from the day of their birth, with three types of upbringing: physical, intellectual, and moral, in equal measure. Abdurauf Fitrat also stressed that women in particular must be educated and knowledgeable about health preservation and child-rearing so that children grow up to be educated, wise, and worthy contributors to the nation's progress. In the section “Physical Education” of the work, he stressed that parents must protect their children from various infectious diseases, especially smallpox – one of the diseases most harmful to infants – and noted that its complications cause greater misfortune to girls [7].

Among the reformist intellectuals of Bukhara, Said Ahroriy also emphasized in his articles “The Role of Education and Upbringing in Human Development” and “The Education of Thought” that mothers, as the individuals responsible for their children's well-being, should possess essential knowledge about child rearing, maintaining children's health and providing proper care when they become ill [8].

Vadud Mahmud (1898 – 1976) of the Samarkand Jadids also stressed the need for special and serious attention to children's upbringing and, in particular, their health. He criticized mothers for not having sufficient knowledge about health in the process of raising children, for making errors in feeding from an early age – feeding children at any time without establishing a proper schedule, filling their pockets with raisins, and allowing them to eat whatever they found – thereby disrupting children's digestive systems.[9] He wrote that this situation also seriously damages the child's moral upbringing, causing children to grow up greedy and spoiled. He regarded children growing up with crooked limbs and misaligned faces as a result of mothers lacking sufficient medical knowledge in child-rearing [10]. Aligning with the aforementioned perspectives, Haji Muin highlighted the public's neglect of health and sanitation [11]. He observed that poor dietary practices and the use of unsafe drinking water susceptible individuals to various pathogens and infectious diseases – most notably guinea worm disease (rishta), an endemic affliction in Bukhara during that period. This observation is further corroborated by Sadriddin Ayni in his Memoirs [12].

Abdusalom Azimiy, in his article “Ta’lim va tarbiya” (Education and Upbringing) published in the journal “Oyina,” also criticized mothers’ insufficient medical knowledge in raising children and their conviction that it suffices for a child simply to eat until full [13].

In the Bukhara press, articles written by women also emphasized that mothers lacked sufficient medical knowledge in raising children, and that they therefore needed to acquire education for the sake of family life and child-rearing [14]. In these views, the Jadids repeatedly stressed, first and foremost, the necessity of paying careful attention to children’s health and upbringing throughout the process of raising them. Sadriddin Ayni also recommended that girls should be raised with good morals and character from a young age before being given in marriage [15].

The Jadids also emphasized that serious attention should be paid to the health of young men and women when forming a family. In section No. 47 of his article “Hifzi Sihhat-i Oila,” Mahmudkhoja Behbudi stressed that sons and daughters should form a family at the appropriate time, after reaching maturity and full adulthood. He noted that forming a family prematurely would result in people being unable to serve society adequately, in health problems arising, and in the possibility that children born would be unhealthy, while marrying too late would also be harmful. He believed that men should be approximately 25 – 30 years of age and women 20 – 22 years of age when forming a family, and supported his views with medical data. Abdurauf Fitrat also stated that girls should not be given in marriage before the age of 18 and outlined the medically negative consequences of early marriage [16].

The periodic press of Turkestan also covered the issue of giving girls in early marriage as one of the most pressing and acute problems. An issue of “Turkiston viloyatining gazeti” (The Gazette of Turkestan Province) dated July 3, 1895 provided information stating that while girls begin to reach puberty from the age of nine, their bodies fully develop by the age of twenty, and that for this reason early marriage is harmful both to girls’ health and to the children they will bear. The fact that the law of the Russian Empire set the minimum marriage age for girls at sixteen was noted, and the practice of local people giving their daughters in marriage from the age of nine was criticized. Mahmudkhoja Behbudi emphasized that young men and women marrying at the appropriate time was medically beneficial and also had an impact on public life. He stressed the necessity of marriage for human beings through the following words: “It is natural for men to take a wife. It is impossible for a man to live alone without a wife. Every man and woman is in need of each other’s help, support, and shared life. If men and women do not establish a household as husband and wife through lawful (Sharia) marriage, a breach will appear in contemporary human society and civilization, setting it on a path toward decline and ruin”.

Discussion. Issues of public health – particularly women’s health – had been elevated to the level of state policy in that era. According to researchers, although medical institutions for women were also built in Turkestan by the Russian Empire, these institutions served the function of promoting missionary activities among women. In particular, General N. I. Korolkov (1837 – 1906), who served as governor of the Fergana Province from 1885 to 1892, noted in his program that the women and children of the region needed to be taught the Russian way of life, that Russian female physicians could serve a “missionary” function, and that if Christian women lived among and established contact with Uzbek women, they could exert their influence over them, instill Christian worldviews through their way of life, and divert them from their faith. He also proposed increasing the number of women’s outpatient clinics in the region to carry out such work successfully. Additionally, he specifically

emphasized the need to recruit women's monasteries from Russia "to serve in instilling Orthodox Russian views" among the women of Turkestan .

Local rulers in the Turkestan region also undertook a number of efforts to improve agriculture, trade, education, living standards, and public health under the influence of significant changes taking place in the world. One such ruler was Emir Abdulahad Khan, who implemented a number of measures to preserve public health during his reign. In 1889, he purchased medicines worth 6,000 rubles from Russia for the treatment of malaria. In 1897, he issued a strict order to prevent Indians from entering the country at the borders in order to stop the spread of the "Indian cholera" epidemic. However, as Indians continued to enter Bukhara through various routes, military guards were stationed at the Afghan borders on the recommendation of the qazi-kalan and divanbegi. He also refused to permit Bukharans to undertake the Hajj pilgrimage due to the spread of cholera. His successor, Emir Alimkhan, continued the work of improving public health. Paying particular and serious attention to the medical health of women and children, a women's hospital was opened on his initiative in July 1911. A female physician of Russian nationality served 3,551 women and children during 1911, and treated 13,551 patients in 1912. A maternity ward was also built adjacent to the hospital in 1912. According to information provided by historian Dilnoza Jamalova based on archival sources, the emir had outpatient clinics and hospitals for men and women built in Old Bukhara, Kerki, Charjou, Hisor, Dushanbe, Qarshi, and Shakhrisabz between 1913 and 1916. A women's outpatient clinic and hospital were constructed in Old Bukhara, which operated as the largest hospital in the emirate. The emirate government allocated 31,173 rubles and 50 tiyin from the state treasury annually for the operation of this hospital.

Conclusion

The Jadids included the issue of women in their programs imbued with the idea of national independence. In their views, they emphasized to their contemporaries that women are the raisers of a healthy generation, and that therefore special attention must be paid to women's health and education. The Jadids' views on women's education, upbringing, and health remain significant both for their own era and for the present day.

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