



WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM IN THE VIEWS OF TURKESTAN JADID INTELLECTUALS

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Muhammadyusuf KHABIBULLO KHOJI

*Chief Specialist, Committee on Religious
Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan*

E-mail: xxmao1993@gmail.com

ORCID: [0009-0005-6647-7172](https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6647-7172)

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Abstract. *The study examines women's education and social activism in the views of Turkestan Jadid intellectuals at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The problem is analysed through the development of new-method schools, the Jadid press, discussions on female literacy, family upbringing, moral renewal and national progress. The article shows that the Jadids viewed women's education as a formative condition for social modernization, the strengthening of the family educational environment and the emergence of an active cultural subject within Turkestan society. The views of Ismail Gasprinsky, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdurauf Fitrat, Abdulla Avloni, Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov, Hamza, Cholpon and Abdulla Qodiriy are considered in connection with the broader enlightenment programme of the Jadid movement.*

Keywords: *Turkestan, Jadids, women's education, social activism, girls' schooling, new-method school, Jadid press, family upbringing, national progress.*

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the problem of women's education became one of the most significant issues in the intellectual life of Turkestan. The transformation of the educational sphere, the emergence of new-method schools, the development of the periodical press and the growth of public debate created a new space in which the role of women in family, upbringing and society was reconsidered. Jadid intellectuals approached this issue through the ideas of enlightenment, moral renewal and national progress.

The social position of women in Turkestan cannot be reduced to a single scheme. Traditional norms, Islamic legal ideas, local customs, urban and rural differences, family status and access to home instruction created a diverse historical landscape. Girls could study in domestic educational circles, with *otinoyi* and *bibiotin*, and in some cases receive literacy in reading, religious texts, poetry and practical household culture. This experience preserved a certain educational tradition, though it did not give a wide and systematic path to modern schooling (Pashino, 1868).

The Jadid movement gave the question of women's education a new conceptual meaning. For the Jadids, an educated woman was linked with the education of children, the moral atmosphere of the family, the cultural strength of society and the formation of a responsible generation. Female literacy was therefore not treated as an isolated domestic matter. It was connected with the modernization of the school, the reform of social consciousness and the future of the nation.

The purpose of this article is to analyse women's education and social activism in the views of Turkestan Jadid intellectuals. The study considers the ideological origins of this question, the role of new-method schools, the influence of the press, the educational views of leading Jadids and the link between female literacy, family upbringing and national progress.

MAIN PART

The source base of the study consists of Jadid periodicals, pedagogical works, publicistic texts, literary heritage, memoir materials and modern historical research. The newspapers *Turkestanskije vedomosti*, *Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi*, *Sadoi Turkiston* and *Sadoi Farg'ona* played an important role in reflecting the social meaning of women's education (*Turkestanskije vedomosti*, 1875; Fathiddinzoda, 1914). The heritage of Ismail Gasprinsky occupies a special place in the formation of the Jadid educational programme. His ideas on new-method teaching, the role of the press and the need for enlightenment among Muslim communities influenced the intellectual environment of Turkestan (Tikhonova, 2016).

The works and activities of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdurauf Fitrat, Abdulla Avloni, Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov, Hamza, Cholpon and Abdulla Qodiriy show

the diversity of Jadid approaches to the women's question (Sharipov, 2002; Fitrat, 2000; Avloni, 1992). Modern historiography has created a broader framework for studying this issue: D. A. Alimova examined the history of the women's question in Central Asia; D. N. Rajabova analysed the views of Turkestan Jadids on youth and women; B. Qosimov highlighted the cultural and social meaning of Jadidism within the national awakening movement (Alimova, 1991; Rajabova, 2003; Qosimov, 2002).

The article uses the principles of historicity, comparative analysis, the problem-chronological approach and source criticism. The views of Jadid intellectuals are analysed in connection with social context, educational practice, press discourse and the evolution of family and gender-related ideas.

In traditional Turkestan society education was shaped by maktabas, madrasas, home teaching and religious-moral instruction. The educational experience of girls was usually connected with domestic circles and female teachers. Otinoyi and bibiotin transmitted religious literacy, poetry, moral norms and practical knowledge. These forms of education had a stable social role, yet the rapid changes of the late nineteenth century revealed their limitations in relation to modern knowledge and public life (Pashino, 1868).

The Jadids did not simply reject existing traditions. They sought to reinterpret them through the value of knowledge, moral responsibility and the needs of a changing society. In their view, the family remained a central institution, yet it had to be strengthened through literacy, discipline, hygiene, rational upbringing and awareness of social duties. Women's education was thus presented as a way to improve the family from within and to prepare children for a new cultural environment.

Ismail Gasprinsky's educational thought influenced this direction. His new-method system aimed to make learning faster, clearer and more practical. Gasprinsky argued for the modernization of Muslim education and linked literacy with social progress. In his intellectual programme, the education of women was connected with the renewal of society, because the mother played a formative role in the first stages of a child's upbringing (Tikhonova, 2016).

Mahmudkhoja Behbudi considered education the main condition of social development. His publicistic and pedagogical activity placed the school at the centre of reform. In the Jadid understanding shared by Behbudi, girls' education was not a secondary matter. The literacy of women strengthened the family, raised the level of

upbringing and helped society overcome ignorance, passivity and narrow everyday practices (Sharipov, 2002).

Abdurauf Fitrat gave the family a central place in the project of social renewal. In his work on the family he discussed marriage, parental duties, moral responsibility and the upbringing of children. Fitrat connected the quality of the family environment with the cultural future of society. For him, an uneducated mother could not fully perform the educational mission expected by a changing society. Women's education was therefore linked with the stability of the family and the moral development of the next generation (Fitrat, 2000).

Abdulla Avloni developed the pedagogical dimension of this issue. His educational thought emphasised morality, discipline, knowledge, labour, responsibility and social usefulness. Within this framework, the mother appeared as one of the first educators of the child. Her literacy and moral culture shaped the child's speech, habits, attitude to knowledge and sense of duty. Avloni's ideas helped to present female education as a pedagogical necessity (Avloni, 1992).

Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov and other educators supported the spread of new-method schools and practical teaching (Munavvarqori, 2003). The new school offered a different organisation of learning, a clearer method, textbooks, examinations and public demonstrations of results. Discussions around girls' education were connected with the wider acceptance of this school model.

The Jadid press gave these ideas a public language. Articles in Sadoi Turkiston and related publications addressed women's rights, the value of literacy, the harm of early marriage and the role of mothers in social development. The press helped turn private family questions into issues of public concern. It also created an intellectual bridge between religious-moral arguments and modern pedagogical needs (Turkestanskie vedomosti, 1875; Fathiddinzoda, 1914). A significant feature of the Jadid position was the use of Islamic and moral arguments in support of women's education. Enlightenment was not presented as a foreign imitation. It was justified through respect for knowledge, parental responsibility and the duty to raise a morally strong generation.

The literary works of Hamza, Cholpon and Abdulla Qodiriy gave emotional and artistic force to these ideas. Hamza often criticised ignorance, forced marriage and the suffering of women through dramatic forms. Cholpon's works expressed the longing

for dignity, freedom and moral awakening. Qodiriy revealed the complexity of family relations and the need for a cultured attitude towards women. Literature thus expanded the social influence of the Jadid educational programme (Hamza, 1988; Cholpon, 1994; Qodiriy, 2004).

Women's social activism in Jadid thought emerged from education. Literacy allowed women to read newspapers, understand public issues, participate in family decisions, support children's schooling and engage in cultural initiatives. As the social meaning of literacy widened, women could move from a limited domestic role towards a broader cultural presence. The experience of enlightened women such as Dilshod Barno, Anbar Otin and Uvaysiy demonstrated that women were not merely subjects of reformist discourse. They were transmitters of knowledge, poetry, ethics and cultural memory (Nalivkin & Nalivkina, 1886).

The study shows that Turkestan Jadid intellectuals viewed women's education as a central component of social and cultural renewal. Female literacy was connected with the development of new-method schools, the strengthening of family upbringing, the moral education of children and the growth of national consciousness. The idea of the educated mother became a key conceptual element. Through this image, the Jadids connected individual literacy with collective progress. A literate mother was expected to shape the first intellectual and moral environment of the child and to support the social value of schooling (Ayniy, 1906).

The views of Gasprinsky, Behbudi, Fitrat, Avloni, Munavvarqori, Hamza, Cholpon and Qodiriy demonstrate a common intellectual direction. Despite differences of genre and emphasis, they linked women's education with the renewal of Turkestan society and with the moral responsibility of the nation.

CONCLUSION

Women's education and social activism occupied a significant place in the views of Turkestan Jadid intellectuals. The Jadids understood female literacy as a condition for strengthening the family, raising a conscious generation, developing new schools and expanding the cultural capacity of society. Their approach united educational reform, moral responsibility and national progress.

The historical importance of these views lies in the fact that women's education was included in a broad programme of modernization. Through the school, the press, literature and public initiatives, Jadids sought to create a new attitude towards knowledge and to expand the social role of women. The idea of the educated mother became one of the most powerful arguments in favour of girls' schooling and female literacy.

The Jadid interpretation of women's education remains important for understanding the social history of Turkestan. It reveals how educational reform, family culture, gender relations and national awakening were connected in a single intellectual process. The study of this heritage helps to clarify the internal sources of social modernization in the region and the role of women as active participants in cultural renewal.

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