



THE ROLE OF ENLIGHTENED WOMEN IN THE MODERNIZATION OF TURKESTAN EDUCATION

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Abstract. *This thesis analyzes the role of enlightened women in the modernization of Turkestan education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The study examines the activities of otinoyi and bibiotin schools, female intellectuals such as Dilshod Barno, Anbar Otin, Uvaysiy and Samar-Bonu, as well as the influence of women's voices in the Jadid press on educational processes. Women's initiatives are considered in connection with girls' literacy, literary and moral education, the expansion of school culture and the transfer of educational issues into public discussion.*

Keywords: *Turkestan, enlightened women, girls' education, otinoyi, bibiotin, Dilshod Barno, Anbar Otin, Jadid press.*

INTRODUCTION

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Turkestan society entered a process of renewal under the influence of colonial rule, traditional social orders, and the Jadid movement. In this process, the content, methods, and social function of the education system were reconsidered. Whereas girls' education had previously existed primarily as a form of religious and moral instruction carried out within the household and the mahalla, by the beginning of the twentieth century it had become a broader social issue connected with public debate, the press, and school reform.

Enlightened women emerged as important participants in these changes. Their activities were not limited to teaching literacy; they also helped cultivate literary taste, moral views, social awareness, and speech culture among girls. The educational environment created through otinoyi and bibiotin schools later served as an internal foundation for Jadid pedagogy, women's contributions to the press, and girls' schools.



Main Part. One of the earliest institutional forms of enlightened women's activity in Turkestan was the otinoyi and bibiotin schools. Although these schools were often organized in private homes, their social function was broad. Girls learned the Arabic script, religious texts, moral-didactic literature, poetry, and elements of basic arithmetic. Some educated women conducted lessons systematically and introduced girls to the heritage of classical authors such as Hafiz, Sa'di, Navoi, Bedil, Fuzuli, and others (Pashino, 1868:160–161).

P. I. Pashino observed that, in some such institutions, girls received a more thorough education than boys (Vulfson, 1908:106–107). This evidence shows that portraying traditional women's schools solely as centers of elementary religious literacy narrows the historical picture. They provided girls with an environment in which to develop skills in language, literature, ethics, religious culture, and everyday social interaction.

Dilshod Barno's work is one of the most striking examples of women's educational activity in Turkestan. Sources report that she taught girls for many years, educated 20–30 girls annually, and trained hundreds of pupils over the course of her teaching career (Mukhtarov, 1969:40–41). Some of the girls who studied at Dilshod Barno's school later engaged in poetry and educational work. This indicates that a mentor–pupil tradition, a creative environment, and educational continuity developed within women's schools.

Enlightened women such as Anbar Otin, Uvaysiy, and Samar-Bonu also contributed to broadening the content of girls' education. Their literary and pedagogical work placed central emphasis on women's spiritual dignity, capacity for learning, and entitlement to social respect. This approach helped move beyond viewing girls' education solely as a religious duty and interpret it instead as a means of personal development and of raising society's cultural level.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Jadid press became a new arena for the activities of enlightened women. The “Women's Voice” column in the newspaper Sadoi Turkiston, contributions published in Sadoi Farg'ona, and open letters addressed by women to public figures brought issues of education, rights, labor, and civic participation into broad public debate (Fathiddinzoda, 1914). This process marked the movement of women's voices from the domestic sphere into the public arena of the press.

Women's contributions to the press raised issues such as opening girls' schools, training female teachers, rewarding their work, and subjecting educational quality to



public oversight (Rahimova, 1992). Thus, in the modernization of the education system, enlightened women appeared as students, educators, initiators, critical commentators, and participants in public debate.

Another important aspect of enlightened women's work was their connection of education with everyday life. Alongside literacy, the etiquette of worship, and moral norms, they taught girls such skills as reading poetry, comprehending texts, expressing ideas, and understanding responsibility in family relations. This upbringing later created a natural social foundation for the Jadid idea of "an educated mother—a well-rounded generation."

While Jadid intellectuals interpreted women's education as a cornerstone of national development, enlightened women became the practical implementers of this idea. By educating girls, they strengthened the bridge between school and family, enhanced women's educational role, and connected the learning process with society's actual needs. In this sense, their activity can be assessed as an internal social force in the modernization of Turkestan's education system.

Conclusion. Enlightened women played an important role in the modernization of Turkestan's education system. Otinoyi and bibiotin schools served as stable institutions for girls' literacy, moral education, and the development of literary and aesthetic taste. The work of women such as Dilshod Barno, Anbar Otin, Uvaysiy, and Samar-Bonu contributed to broadening educational content and forming a generation of female intellectuals.

First, enlightened women helped elevate girls' education from the domestic sphere to a social phenomenon of public importance. Second, their pedagogical and literary activity enriched the literary, moral, and social content of education. Third, the strengthening of women's voices in the Jadid press transformed education into a sphere of open discussion, initiative, and public oversight.

The modernization of Turkestan's education system unfolded through the interaction of Jadid intellectuals' ideas, the experience of traditional schools, and the initiatives of enlightened women. In this process, women's activity emerged as an important factor driving modernization from within.



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