

**CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF QASHQADARYO IN THE
EARLY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE**

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Abstract: This research examines the reforms implemented in the education system of Qashqadaryo Region during the early years of Uzbekistan's independence, the transformation of educational content and management structures, the formation of new educational concepts, and the processes of strengthening the material and technical base. The study provides a scientific analysis of the development trends in preschool, general secondary, secondary specialized and higher educational institutions in the region. It also highlights the improvement of the teacher training system, the introduction of education models based on national values, and the democratization of the educational process. The scientific significance of the work lies in revealing the essence of educational reforms introduced in Qashqadaryo during the initial period of independence through new historical approaches.

Keywords: Qashqadaryo region, independence, education system, reforms, learning process, teacher training, national education model, democratization, modernization, material-technical base, new curricula.

The achievement of Uzbekistan's independence in 1991 marked a new historical stage that brought profound changes to all spheres of socio-political life in the country. This transformation directly affected the education system as well, making it necessary to reorganize the system on the basis of national interests, spiritual values, and the principles of a market economy. In the early years of independence, large-scale reforms were implemented in Qashqadaryo Region aimed at improving the functioning of educational institutions, updating the learning process, and ensuring the continuity of education.

In the region, priority was given to strengthening the material and technical base of educational institutions, constructing new schools and academic buildings, renovating existing ones, and updating teaching materials based on national values. A new system for training and upgrading the qualifications of pedagogical staff was introduced in accordance with state policy. These measures created a foundation for qualitative renewal of the educational process and for shaping curricula based on the national model.

This study aims to scientifically analyze the essence of educational reforms carried out in Qashqadaryo Region during the early years of independence, assess their practical outcomes, and determine their impact on the subsequent development of the sector. The relevance of this research stems from the need to effectively utilize the experiences of the independence period in the ongoing modernization of today's education system.

The early years of independence, particularly 1991–1997, were marked by socioeconomic difficulties in Uzbekistan, which negatively affected all spheres of social life. This period in the education system was characterized by the accumulation of numerous unresolved problems. Among them were the lack of application of international experience in organizing the education

system, outdated regulatory frameworks, the deterioration of the material-technical base of schools, outdated educational content, and the low qualification of teachers.

In the 1991–1992 academic year, there were 917 general education schools in Qashqadaryo Region, 822 of which operated in rural areas. The number of students in the region reached 429,629, of whom 337,982 were rural schoolchildren. In Surxondaryo Region, 677 schools served 332,965 students, with 626 of them located in rural areas, accommodating 286,855 students [1]. These figures indicate that in the southern regions most schools operated in rural territories, making improvements in rural education a vital necessity.

In subsequent years, the number of general education schools in the southern regions continued to grow. For example, in the second half of 1992, the number of schools in Qashqadaryo reached 943: 37 in Qarshi city, 28 in Nishon district, 90 in Yakkabog' district, and 138 in Chiroqchi district. The highest number of students—52,974—was also recorded in Chiroqchi. On average, each class in the region had 22–24 students, with the highest average (29.5) in Koson and the lowest (16.4) in Dehqonobod[2]. These data clearly show that the expansion of the education system occurred primarily in rural districts.

The independence of 1991 revitalized the stagnant general education system. In accordance with the “Law on Education” adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan on 2 July 1992, the establishment of gymnasiums and lyceums was initiated. This reform was an important step toward meeting the long-standing need to support talented youth. The first efforts in this direction began in Qarshi district. In the 1993–1994 academic year, under the initiative of school researcher and philologist Egamberdi Ergashev, lyceum classes specializing in Uzbek language and literature and in physics-mathematics were opened at Behbudiy School. In the 1994–1995 academic year, 42 students graduated from these lyceum classes, 20 of whom successfully passed entrance exams to higher education institutions. In September 1995, the district administration established a lyceum-boarding school. Students were provided free meals and dormitories, and teachers received a 65% salary bonus. In the following years, the number of lyceum graduates admitted to universities continued to increase: 36 out of 42 in 1995–1996, 39 out of 47 in 1996–1997, and 41 out of 50 in 1997–1998[3].

In Qamashi district, the number of schools reached 80 in the 1993–1994 academic year, including 72 secondary and 8 incomplete secondary schools. During this period, the population increased rapidly, and 37,170 children (18,690 girls) were enrolled in schools. The district employed 3,977 teachers (1,488 women), of whom 2,533 had pedagogical secondary education and 1,208 had specialized pedagogical higher education. The district had 5 secondary schools, 1 incomplete secondary school, 1 evening school, 1 lyceum (with 140 students, headed by D. Shakarov and academic director G. Yusupova), a student center, a youth sports school, and 8 state-funded preschools. Schools had 381 subject classrooms, 90 workshops, electricity in 79 schools, telephones in 46, and dental offices in 12 schools. Thirty-three schools had modern buildings, and ten new ones were under construction. As in the rest of the Republic, measures were taken in Qamashi district to improve public education, elevate it to a high level under the conditions of independence, and ensure modern vocational training for youth[3].

In Qashqadaryo Region, certain measures were also implemented in this direction. In 1993, the Regional Department of Capital Construction allocated 439.2 million soums for the construction of general education schools. These funds were used to build a 320-seat school in Kuchkak village of Qarshi district, a 420-seat school on the territory of the “Chuli Ota”

collective farm, and a 624-seat school in Beshkent village[4]. In the same year, the construction of new school buildings continued in other districts of the region as well. In 1992, a 192-seat school building was constructed in the village of O‘qotar in Kasbi district[5]. In addition, 133 million soums were spent on the construction of a school building in Qataghan village of Kasbi district, and 203 million soums for a school in Qoraho‘ja village. Due to insufficient funding, many school buildings were not completed on time. For example, out of 13 school buildings planned in Kasbi district, construction works in 6 of them were not completed within the scheduled period[6]. These developments show that although the state allocated certain funds and attention to strengthening the material and technical base of the education system in the early years of independence, negligence and mismanagement led to the accumulation of problems in school construction.

In 1993, among the general education schools of Qashqadaryo Region, 6 schools taught in Russian, 36 in Russian-Uzbek, 41 in Tajik, 8 in Tajik-Uzbek, and 8 schools conducted classes in Turkmen. To improve the teaching and learning process, seminars and conferences were regularly held at district, city, and regional levels. For example, a regional seminar on “Using Advanced Methods in Teaching Tajik Language and Literature” was organized at the Zebiniso School in Kitob district; conferences dedicated to the 1000th anniversary of Ferdowsi’s masterpiece “Shahnama” were held in Guzor, Dehqonobod, Kitob, and Shahrisabz districts. A seminar titled “Current Issues in Teaching the Turkmen Language” was held at the Mahtumquli School in Bahoriston district. Teachers of Turkmen maintained regular professional contacts with colleagues in Chardzhou (Turkmenabat) city and Kerki district of Turkmenistan[7]. The presence of various ethnic groups in Qashqadaryo and Surxondaryo regions necessitated instruction in Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen, and Russian languages.

In the general education schools of Qashqadaryo Region, 103 lyceum-type classes were organized with an enrollment of 2,332 students; 116 gymnasium-type classes enrolled 4,089 students; and 4,479 classes with advanced curricula enrolled 100,333 students. Bank-specialized classes operated in Schools No. 3 and No. 34 in Qarshi city. In total, in the 1997 academic year, 112,775 students, or 21.7% of the region’s schoolchildren, studied in new-type specialized classes. The development of public education in the city was significantly influenced by dedicated teachers who devoted their lives and careers to the upbringing of youth—such as Muqaddam Murodova, Muhabbat Mamedova, Muhtaram Shukurova, To‘lqin Yo‘ldoshev, Muhabbat Sharopova, Ra‘no Sodiqova, Venera Egamova, To‘ti Majidova, Kho‘jam Jo‘rayev, Erkin Niyozov, Nusrat Nusutov, Mannon Salomov, and others[8].

On 17 August 1992, based on the proposals of the district governors of Qamashi, Qarshi, Koson, Muborak, Ulyanov, Chiroqchi, Shahrisabz, and Yakkabog‘ regarding the naming and renaming of various sites, the names of several schools were changed. For example, the school named “40 Years of Uzbekistan Komsomol” in Qamashi district was renamed after Orin Mirzayev; the Shevchenko School in Qarshi district became Mahmud Mamatov School; the Kuybyshev School was renamed after Khudoyberdi Narziev; the Chernyshevsky School in Muborak district became Niyozkhon Jigayeyev School; in Chiroqchi district, the Sverdlov School was renamed after Suyun Boymurodov, the “Pravda” School after Shukur Murodov, and the Ushinsky School after Mukiddin Nurmatov; the “Lenin Yuli” School was renamed after Qoshqoq Ochilov; in Shahrisabz district, the Dmitrov School became Ibodulla Toshapov School,

the P. Morozov School became Shukur Burhonov School, and the Makarenko School was renamed after Abu Nasr Farobi[9]. Many of these schools still retain their new names today.

During this period, efforts were also made to improve teacher qualifications and retraining. For instance, between 1991 and 1994, 1,200 teachers from Qarshi district attended retraining and qualification upgrade courses[10]. In the 1994–1995 academic year, 56 teachers from Koson district improved their qualifications[11]. Over the years, systematic work was conducted to enhance teacher professional development.

A total of 524 teachers underwent retraining in the teaching of old Uzbek script (Arabic-based script) through the Regional Institute of Teacher Qualification. Regional seminars were held in Guzor district and the city of Qarshi. Schools were provided with sufficient textbooks and curricula for this subject. Teachers productively used manuals such as “Arabic Script and Vocabulary” and the “Arabic-Uzbek Dictionary” authored by R. Imomkhodjaev and I. Umarova. Moreover, in August 1993, one teacher from each school attended training courses on teaching economic knowledge[12].

Practical work was also conducted in the region on new subjects introduced into the curriculum, including ethics (Odobnoma), old Uzbek script, the history of the peoples of Uzbekistan, history of religions, basics of economics, and law studies. To improve the teaching of the “Odobnoma” subject, a regional seminar was organized at the U. Yusupov School in Kasbi district[13].

The Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan developed special measures for 1990–1995 to implement the State program on the “Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the State Language,” and certain steps were taken to carry out this program. In particular, conditions were created within the system of general education institutions of the Republic to enable Russian-speaking citizens, teachers and students to master the state language [14].

More than 323,000 teachers worked in Uzbek-language general education schools across the Republic. The share of Russian-language schools staffed with specialists in “Uzbek Language and Literature” reached 97 percent. Beginning in the second half of the 1990–1991 academic year, Uzbek language instruction was introduced in Grade 1 classes of Russian schools at the rate of two hours per week. Under the leadership of Associate Professor A. Rafiev (PhD in Philology) of Tashkent State Pedagogical Institute, a working group of experienced teachers quickly prepared methodological recommendations for this purpose [15].

The same type of educational institutions were established in towns and districts of Qashqadaryo Region. In the 1993–1994 academic year, Qashqadaryo had six special boarding schools, which cared for 1,234 children. These included a boarding school for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (250 pupils), a boarding school for children with intellectual disabilities (300 pupils), a boarding school for visually impaired children (352 pupils), a boarding school for children with tuberculosis (350 pupils), and a boarding school for children with bone diseases (282 pupils). In addition, three children’s homes operated in the region, serving 200 children [16]. The post-independence education reforms were also reflected in these care institutions.

In Shahrisabz district, the G. Gulom Secondary School No. 33 was relocated to a new building with capacity for 844 students. Given that the school’s instructional and material base met required standards, that classrooms and dormitory and meal facilities were adequate, that it was fully staffed with specialists, and that district schools could select talented students who had

completed Grade 7 in physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, Uzbek language and literature, a lyceum was established on the base of the school beginning in the 1992–1993 academic year. The lyceum organized five classes for Grade 7 in which physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology and Uzbek language and literature were taught at an in-depth level [17].

District administrations and the regional public education department reviewed and upgraded existing lyceums and boarding schools in district centers, equipping them with additional academic buildings, dormitories, canteens, furniture and instructional materials. Lyceum-boarding schools were established in the center of Dehqonobod district and in the village of Kokdala in Chiroqchi district [18].

At the Regional Institute for Advanced Training of Public Education Personnel, 5,928 education workers were tested in 1993 and 6,000 in 1994 using standardized tests. In cooperation with the AXELS society, three-stage test examinations were held for study in U.S. schools; 17 students participated in the final stage of this testing together with pupils from Qashqadaryo and Surxondaryo Regions [19]. In cooperation with the Ulugbek Foundation, aptitude tests for gifted children were also conducted; 122 students took part in these tests.

In 251 classes across the region, 5,394 pupils were taught according to advanced (in-depth) curricula. In A. Temur School (Shahrisabz), Uzbek language and literature teacher Avloqulov Yashnar, chemistry-biology teacher Sharipova Yoldoshoy, M. Bedil School mathematics teacher Tojiddinov Sirojiddin, and Qarshi City School No. 5 mathematics teacher Sharopova Muhabbat introduced testing as a means of assessing mastery after completing a particular section or chapter rather than relying solely on traditional daily grades [20].

Psychologist positions were introduced at A. Qahhor and A. Navoi Schools in Shahrisabz and at the Sh. Joniev School in Qamashi district; with the support of these specialists, selection into in-depth classes via testing yielded very positive results.

At A. Ikromov School (Nishon district), teachers B. Toshboev and A. Otaberganov; at Ulugbek School, computer science teacher Sh. Turdiev; and at M. Tursunzoda School (Kasbi district), computer science teacher F. Joniyev—worked on creating test materials and using them; their experience was subsequently disseminated to other educational institutions [21].

The regional public education department, in collaboration with Abdurassul Ergashev (Head of the Qashqadaryo branch of the Academy of Engineering of the Republic of Uzbekistan), administered diagnostic test examinations to assess the subject knowledge of higher-education-qualified mathematics teachers teaching Grades VIII–XI in the region. A total of 1,366 teachers took part in that examination. None of the participants received a top score of “5.” One hundred fifty teachers achieved “4” (10.8%); 487 teachers scored “3” (35.2%); 699 teachers scored “2” (50.4%); and 50 teachers scored “1” (3.6%) [21]. The conclusions drawn from these results were forwarded to regional and district administrations and to public education departments. Particular attention was given to teachers’ certification, enrollment in appropriate professional development courses, and the findings of pedagogical events held during methodological days and school holidays. Seminars, councils, conferences and roundtables were organized in cooperation with the Retraining Institute of Qarshi State University and the public education department [22].

The regional public education department conducted diagnostic analyses of some schoolchildren in Chiroqchi district in Uzbek language and literature, physics and mathematics. The results were not satisfactory. Among 344 students tested in Uzbek language and literature,

144 earned marks “5” and “4,” 92 earned “3,” and 108 earned “2.” Of the 18 classes analyzed, only 8 classes demonstrated that pupils had mastered 56–79% of the program material [22].

The principal cause of such outcomes was the shortage of qualified pedagogical specialists. In the 1993–1994 academic year, the region lacked 1,396 teachers; shortages were especially acute in subjects such as mathematics, Uzbek language and literature, physics and chemistry. Consequently, in some schools teachers were required to teach up to 2–2.5 full loads, and non-specialist teachers were sometimes used [23].

Some measures were taken to improve teachers’ social living conditions and raise salaries. By Presidential Decree “On Measures to Socially Protect the Population under Conditions of Liberalized Pricing,” wages for employees in public education, healthcare, culture, social welfare, science, state institutions and housing-communal services were to be doubled from 1 January 1992 compared to 1991 levels. Pursuant to the Cabinet of Ministers’ decision of 8 January 1992, teachers’ salaries were doubled retroactively from 1 January of that year.

In Qashqadaryo Region, 5,460 pedagogical staff who applied to privatize state housing were granted ownership of their homes. Land plots were allocated for private house construction to 1,516 teachers, and state loans for house construction were extended to 371 teachers. Sanatorium vouchers were provided to 1,208 teachers. Teachers received benefits such as exemptions from fees for housing and communal services and free travel on urban transport. Teachers in Dehqonobod, Chiroqchi, Qarshi, Koson and Guzor districts were supplied with bottled gas [24].

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