

**REFORMISM IN TURKESTAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY:
EDUCATION AND NATIONAL ISSUES**

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Abstract

The article analyzes the role of the reform movement that emerged in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century in modernizing education, shaping national identity, and developing ideas of social progress. School reforms, new educational literature, press activities, and views on national issues promoted by the Jadid and reformist intelligentsia serve as an important theoretical source for today's spiritual and educational policy. Reformism in Turkestan is considered not only as an educational phenomenon but also as a complex process closely connected with national consciousness, cultural awakening, and political thinking. It is substantiated that the reform movement gave a strong impetus to the formation of modern education, national unity, and social activity in Turkestan.

Keywords

Turkestan, reformism, Jadidism, education, national issue, Jadid method, national awakening, press, school, enlightenment.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20th century, reformism became one of the most historically significant phenomena in the social life of Turkestan. Although the region was experiencing economic, political, and cultural pressure under colonial rule, the emergence of a new generation of intellectuals strengthened the need for renewal within society. In such an environment, the Jadid and broader reformist movement arose from the necessity to modernize education, increase literacy, awaken national identity, and rethink the future of Turkestan.

Reformist intellectuals viewed education as the main factor of social development. While not completely rejecting traditional schools and madrasas, they emphasized the need to restructure them in accordance with modern requirements [1]. Therefore, efforts intensified to spread enlightenment through new-method schools, textbooks, press publications, and theatrical works. At the same time, the national issue occupied a central place, as reforming education was closely linked with developing the native language, understanding national history and culture, and expanding views on political rights and freedoms.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the main directions of the reform movement in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century in relation to education and national issues, to reveal its impact on social development, and to formulate methodological conclusions relevant for today.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study uses methods of historicism, comparative analysis, a systematic approach, and conceptual generalization. First, the political and social conditions of the period in which the reform movement emerged were analyzed. Then, educational reforms, press activities, and views on national issues were examined in an interconnected manner. The analysis focused on Jadid schools, the creation of new textbooks, the development of the national press, and the content of ideas promoted by intellectuals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the most important directions of reformism in Turkestan was the modernization of education. Reformist intellectuals understood that overcoming backwardness was primarily possible through schools. Therefore, they emphasized simplifying teaching methods, reducing the time required for literacy, applying comprehension-based learning, and introducing secular subjects into the curriculum.

Subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, natural sciences, native language, and ethics gained importance, showing that education became closer to real life.

Table 1. Differences between Traditional Schools and New-Method Schools

Criteria	Traditional Education	New-Method Education
Teaching Method	Mainly memorization and repetition	Understanding, explanation, and practical exercises
Curriculum Content	Dominated by religious knowledge	Combination of religious and secular subjects
Teaching Tools	Limited manuscripts and oral teaching	Printed textbooks, visual aids, structured programs
Expected Outcome	Ritual literacy and narrow knowledge	Practical skills, literacy, and social activity

New-method schools were not only a technical innovation but also played a key role in shaping a new way of thinking. While traditional schools focused on memorization, new schools emphasized comprehension, logical thinking, and practical knowledge [2].

Educational reform was closely connected with the national issue. For Turkestan intellectuals, the national issue was not limited to ethnic identity or language protection. It included restoring historical memory, enhancing moral dignity, promoting political awareness, and educating a generation capable of understanding its interests under colonial conditions.

Table 2. Main Directions of the Reform Movement in Education and National Issues

Direction	Main Content	Social Significance
School Reform	New teaching methods, printed textbooks, introduction of secular subjects	Increased literacy and formation of a new intelligentsia
Development of National Language	Education in native language, simplified style, new terminology	Strengthening national identity and literary language norms
Press and Enlightenment	Newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and theater	Growth of public awareness and expansion of mass education
National Consciousness and Legal Thinking	Ideas of national interest, freedom, unity, and progress	Increased political activity and civic responsibility

An important result of the reform movement was the emergence of the national press. Newspapers and journals discussed issues such as education, morality, women's education,



national development, economic backwardness, and political awareness [4]. This created a platform for intellectual exchange and public dialogue.

Another key aspect was attention to women's education and family enlightenment. Reformists understood that social progress depends on the educational level of the entire family, not only men. Therefore, girls' schools and educational materials were actively promoted [5].

Despite facing colonial pressure, conservative resistance, and limited resources, the reform movement significantly influenced education, national consciousness, and social thought in Turkestan. Most importantly, it demonstrated that national progress could be achieved through enlightenment.

CONCLUSION

The reform movement in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century had a profound impact on society by modernizing education and redefining national issues. New-method schools, textbooks, and educational press increased literacy, broadened thinking, and strengthened the need for modern knowledge.

At the same time, education in the native language, interest in national history and culture, and the development of civic responsibility became key factors of national awakening.

Thus, reformism in Turkestan should not be viewed only as a pedagogical or enlightenment movement. It was a complex historical process that combined education, national identity, political thinking, and social responsibility. Even today, its legacy remains relevant for improving education quality, developing modern thinking based on national values, and raising an active civic generation.

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