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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE JADIDS: NATIONAL AWAKENING, EDUCATIONAL REFORMS, AND THE FORMATION OF MODERN THINKING IN TURKESTAN

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Abstract

This scholarly article presents a comprehensive analysis of the historical, socio-political, and cultural-educational essence of the Jadid movement that emerged in Turkestan at the turn of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Special attention is given to the Jadids' efforts to reform the traditional education system, as well as their role in awakening national consciousness through the press, literature, and theater. The article examines the intellectual and ideological legacy of the Jadids and highlights its relevance in the contemporary context of globalization, particularly in shaping modern thinking and educating the younger generation. The Jadid movement is interpreted as a crucial stage in the process of national modernization and spiritual renewal.

Keywords

Jadid movement, national awakening, enlightenment, modernization, usul-i jadid, social consciousness, cultural heritage.

Introduction

In the development of any society, education, science, and intellectual thought play a decisive role. Historical experience demonstrates that a nation's political and economic progress is largely determined by its intellectual potential. In this regard, the Jadid movement that emerged in Turkestan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represented a broad enlightenment initiative launched by progressive intellectuals who clearly understood this reality.

Under the conditions of Russian imperial colonial rule, the peoples of Turkestan faced severe political, economic, and cultural challenges. The traditional education system no longer met the demands of the time, while widespread illiteracy significantly hindered social progress. In response to these conditions, the Jadids proposed education, enlightenment, and the renewal of social consciousness as the only viable path to national salvation. Therefore, following the intellectual legacy of the Jadids remains relevant even in the modern era.

Historical Preconditions for the Emergence of the Jadid Movement: The formation of the Jadid movement was influenced by several historical factors. First, during the second half of the nineteenth century, the quality of education in traditional schools and madrasas in Turkestan significantly declined. Instruction was largely limited to memorization of religious texts, while secular subjects were neglected. This situation led to the region's growing lag behind global scientific and technological progress.

Second, enlightenment movements among Muslim communities within the Russian Empire—particularly in Crimea, Kazan, and Azerbaijan—had a profound impact on Turkestan. Reformist ideas promoted by intellectuals from these regions inspired the Jadids of Turkestan. They sought to develop a national model of progress by harmonizing the cultural achievements of both the East and the West.

Educational Reform and the Usul-i Jadid Schools: One of the central directions of the Jadid movement was educational reform. The Jadids sharply criticized the outdated traditional schooling system and introduced innovative teaching methods. In usul-i jadid (new-method)

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schools, literacy was taught using phonetic methods, enabling students to acquire reading and writing skills within a relatively short period.

These schools placed strong emphasis on secular subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, natural sciences, as well as Russian and foreign languages. Prominent Jadid educators such as Munavvar Qori Abdurashidkhanov, Abdulla Avloni, and Is'hoqkhon Ibrat viewed education as the primary determinant of the nation's future. According to them, national liberation and progress were impossible without an educated generation.

Social Significance of Jadid Schools: Jadid schools played a vital role not only in imparting knowledge but also in fostering social activism and critical thinking. As a result of their activities:

- National consciousness and patriotism among students were strengthened;
- The ability to critically assess social problems was developed;
- A new generation of future intellectuals and social leaders emerged.
- Thus, Jadid educational institutions contributed significantly to the formation of a socially aware and intellectually active segment of society.

Jadids and the Development of the Press: The Jadids regarded the press as one of the most effective tools for awakening society. In the early twentieth century, newspapers and journals such as Taraqqiy, Sadoyi Turkiston, and Oyina played a crucial role in disseminating Jadid ideas to the broader public. These publications addressed pressing issues including social inequality, illiteracy, women's rights, and national unity.

Through the press, the Jadids encouraged people to develop critical thinking and adopt a conscious attitude toward social and political events. This process significantly contributed to the formation of social consciousness and the strengthening of national identity.

Jadid Literature and Theater as Instruments of Social Change: The Jadids also viewed literature and theater as powerful educational and ideological tools. Writers and dramatists such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdulla Avloni, and Hamza Hakimzoda Niyozi depicted social problems and criticized ignorance, religious fanaticism, and social injustice in their works.

Jadid dramaturgy transformed the theater stage into a platform for intellectual reflection and social critique. Plays such as "The Rich and the Poor" exposed social inequality and injustice, while simultaneously promoting education, women's emancipation, and adaptation to modern life. Through literature and theater, the Jadids sought to cultivate national consciousness and critical thinking among the population.

Socio-Political Views of the Jadids: Although the Jadids initially focused primarily on educational and cultural activities rather than direct political engagement, they gradually became involved in socio-political discourse. They advocated for the rule of law, just governance, and the protection of public interests. For the Jadids, political freedom was inconceivable without prior moral and intellectual preparation of society.

Contemporary Significance of the Jadid Legacy: In today's globalized and information-driven world, the ideas promoted by the Jadids are gaining renewed importance. Critical thinking, a commitment to knowledge, preservation of national identity, and openness to the world are essential components of modern education. Following the Jadids does not mean returning to the past, but rather creatively continuing their intellectual heritage under contemporary conditions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Jadid movement occupies a central place in the history of national awakening in Turkestan. The educational, cultural, and journalistic reforms initiated by the Jadids played a decisive role in transforming social consciousness. Their ideas regarding

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enlightenment, progress, and national identity remain relevant today and continue to serve as an important ideological foundation for building a modern society.

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