The educational reform in Russian Turkestan in the early 20th century
- Focusing on attempts of Jadid Intellectuals -

Jasur Khikmatullaev

Purpose of the study

The subject of this study is to analyze the Jadid movement in Turkestan from 1884 up to the Russian revolution in 1917. There were big changes in the history of educational system of Uzbekistan between these years. In this period, Turkestan was a Russian colony and it had several social and economical difficulties. Before Russian rule, the educational system of Turkestan was not well equipped. There were maktabs and madrasahs as traditional educational system. Islam was deeply rooted in Turkestan and it was difficult for Russian authorities to dominate Turkestan. Therefore, Russian authorities selected a method of domination without any frictions. First, the Russian authorities opened elementary schools for Russian children. Later, they opened new schools where both Russian and Turkestani Muslim pupils could learn. These schools were called “Russo-native schools”. Since Islam had been deeply rooted in Turkestan, parents were afraid of Russification of their children and they hesitated to send their children to Russo-native Schools. Instead, Muslim intellectuals (hereafter referred to as “Jadid intellectuals”) planned to introduce modern educational system for Muslim children. Under the Russian rule, Jadid Intellectuals opened “New-method Schools” which could enlighten Muslim people and develop their societies. Behbudiy was working actively for the realization of Turkestan autonomy. He opened a number of new-method schools for this purpose.

Under such circumstances, the main issues for Jadid intellectuals were to enlighten and educate Muslims of Turkestan.

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors how educational reform movement was expanded. As a background, the politic, social and economic circumstances of Russian Turkestan in the early of 20th century were considered. For this issue, some papers, editorials and literatures of Jadid Intellectuals were analyzed. The main focuses are to clarify the ideas of educational reform of Intellectuals, and to clarify how Turkestani Muslims accepted the educational reform.

Contents of the study

Mainly the period from 1884 to The Russian revolution in 1917 was considered in this study. This dissertation consists of seven chapters including an introduction and a conclusion.

In chapter 1, the political, social, economical and cultural circumstances of Turkestan were considered. Moreover, the changes which occurred in Turkestan
after the Russian conquest were analyzed. After the Russian conquest of Turkestan, modernization was introduced in various ways. Russian government introduced postal service, railways, several factories, electric lights and telegraphs. In addition, Russian government was focused on production of cotton after the conquest of this region. The economic situation was improved because of that.

In chapter 2, the traditional educational system maktabs, madrasahs and “Russo-native schools” were concerned. And the efforts made by I. Gaspirinski, who established “new-method schools”, were considered. In the early 20th century, maktabs and madrasahs did no longer correspond to the needs of that society. Both Russian government and Jadid Intellectuals criticised maktab and madrasah system. Under such circumstances, I. Gaspirinski opened “new-method school” not only in Crimea, but also in Turkestan to enlighten all Muslim pupils of Russian Empire. For this purpose, he visited Turkestan twice and discussed about opening “new-method schools” in this area with Turkestani Jadid Intellectuals.

In chapter 3, the rise of Jadid movement, the attempts of Jadid Intellectuals and “new-method schools” were taken into consideration. Furthermore, the attempts of Bekhbudi and his magazine “Ayina” were described. The Muslim Intellectuals understood the illiteracy and ignorance of Turkestani Muslims in the early 20th century and Intellectuals started actively the enlightenment movement under the influence of I.Gaspirinski. In a very short period of time, Jadid Intellectuals opened a number of “new-method schools”, published many textbooks and newspapers, established charity associations and started theatre movement. The representative of Jadid Intellectual, Bekhbudy’s purposes were to unify Turkestan Muslims and to realize “Turkestan autonomy”. It was necessary to improve educational system to realize autonomy.

In chapter 4, the educational ideas of reform of two representatives Jadid Intellectuals Bekhbudiy and Munavvar Kari were described. While Bekhbudiy’s purpose was to realize Turkistan autonomy, Munavvar Kari tried to enlighten Turkestani Muslim through educating youth. It can be said that both of them were thinking about the education system from elementary to higher education. In addition, they expected to send Turkestani young Muslims abroad to pursue their study.

In chapter 5, “Life rituals”, which were considered as a social problem of that period by Jadid Intellectuals, were discussed by analyzing Jadid dramas and some editorials of Jadid Intellectuals. Moreover, how Jadid Intellectuals were thinking about “Life rituals” was examined. Jadid Intellectuals were thinking that instead of spending a lot of money to rituals, it would be better to invest into educational reform in order to improve the social life of Turkestani Muslims.

In the last chapter, two topics were discussed. First, the nationality questions around the term of “Sarts” debated by Russians and Jadid Intellectuals, and then, Bekhbudiy’s ideas of autonomy. At last, the influence of Jadid movement to the modern education in Uzbekistan was discussed. After the conquest of Turkestan region, several problems appeared in the integration of Russians and Turkestan Muslims. Russians were ignoring deep-rooted Islamic traditions and called Turkestani Muslims “Sart”. Turkestani Muslim intellectuals were against being called “Sart”. They tried to enlighten Muslims
by writing articles about the real meaning of the term “Sart”. Bekhbudiy made an effort to realize the Turkestan autonomy from the first Russian revolution in 1905. Therefore, Turkestan autonomy was declared in November 26th 1917, but overthrown by the Soviet Regime in February 22nd 1918.

**Conclusion and future challenges**

The Jadid movement became the basis of Turkestan Muslim’s unifying as a nation, expanding of social wisdom of Turkestan Muslim, and changing of worldview of the people. Jadid intellectuals published a variety of articles about social problems, and tried to resolve peacefully these social problems. They made efforts in order to develop as a nation. It can be seen that there are a number of common points, by comparing the educational system of independent Uzbekistan and Jadid movement. For example, Jadid intellectuals Bekhbudiy and Munavvar Kari wanted to educate Muslim youth and send them to developed countries. The president of Uzbekistan I.Karimov also claimed that the first issue is to reform educational system and send Uzbek youth to developed countries. Moreover, in the early 20th century, reviewing teaching methods, publishing textbooks also became the main issues for Jadid intellectuals. Education reform of Independent Uzbekistan faced the same challenges. To enlighten the youth of Uzbekistan and to change their worldview and sense of values were the main purposes of Independent Uzbekistan Government. It can be said that Jadid movement was the basis of the current Uzbekistan’s educational system. After the independence of Uzbekistan, President Karimov chose the same way as Jadid Intellectuals. From the above, it can be said that Jadid movement significantly affected to the educational reform of Uzbekistan after independence.

Jadid movement is a very big topic and the issues that have been left are numerous. In this dissertation, it was mainly discussed the Jadid movement of Samarkand and Tashkent. In the future, we want to consider Jadid movement of Bukhara also. In this dissertation we could not consider Fitrat’s and Abdulla Avlaniy’s ideas of educational reform. In the future, we want to consider ideas of educational reform of these two intellectuals too. Moreover, we are planning to do a research about the “reciprocal network of Turkestan people”, because we could not do the research about “reciprocal network” in this dissertation.