FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S ENTRY INTO THE SCIENTIFIC SPHERE DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD: A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH AND THE EXPERIENCE OF TURKIC PEOPLES (1945–1991)

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Abstract

This article analyzes the process of women's entry into the scientific field in the Turkic republics of the Soviet Union during 1945–1991 from a pedagogical perspective. It examines in detail the role of female scholars in establishing scientific schools, their contributions to the development of science, as well as patriarchal stereotypes that hinder their professional activity, and pedagogical strategies aimed at overcoming these obstacles.

Keywords

Soviet period, women's scientific activity, pedagogical approach, Turkic peoples, scientific school, historical and cultural values

The years 1945–1991 represent a period of profound economic, political, and scientific-cultural transformation in the history of the Turkic peoples. Within the framework of Soviet modernization, the integration of women into scientific activity became one of the key priorities of state policy. Two major factors played a decisive role in this process:

1. **Soviet educational policy,**
2. **The national–spiritual values of the Turkic peoples.**

The Turkic peoples (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Tatars, and Bashkirs) possessed well-structured socio-cultural systems, in which attitudes toward women, models of upbringing, and family structures shared significant similarities. For this reason, the process of women's integration into scientific activity followed comparable patterns across these societies. Consequently, the relevance of this study lies in the need to analyze women's entry into science at the intersection of the Soviet pedagogical model and the cultural-spiritual traditions of the Turkic peoples.

After 1945, the USSR intensified efforts to expand women's participation in education. This was driven by several factors: the growing demand for labor resources, the shortage of qualified pedagogical and scientific personnel, and the need to promote the ideology of gender equality as an instrument of political propaganda[1].

Between 1950 and 1980, the enrollment of girls in higher education increased three to four times in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan. Soviet ideology defined women's social activity as "a fundamental condition for socialist progress." In school, technical college, and university textbooks, the image of women as researchers, teachers, medical professionals, and engineers was presented as an ideal model to emulate[2]. This model significantly strengthened the motivation of Turkic girls to engage in scientific activities.

The scientific and pedagogical opportunities created for women during the Soviet period included: free higher education; scientific internships; broad access to postgraduate programs; guaranteed employment in research institutes; and "labor privileges" for women.By the 1970s, women accounted for 40% of scientific staff across the USSR, while in the Turkic republics this figure ranged between 45% and 55%.[3]

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[2] Wood E. *Gender and Soviet Ideology.* – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. – P. 56–101.

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Female scholars primarily established scientific schools in the fields of pedagogy, medicine, philology, history, and biology. Many of them made significant contributions to the national development of Soviet scientific schools. For example, in the 1970s, the proportion of women in the institutes of the Academy of Sciences was 48% in Uzbekistan, 46% in Kazakhstan, and 52% in Tatarstan[4].

Although the number of women in leadership positions within the scientific field was relatively low, there were some notable exceptions. For example:

- M. Mirsaidova — Head of an institute laboratory;
- G. Charyeva (Turkmenistan) — Head of a scientific department;
- F. Mustafina (Bashkortostan) — Dean of a faculty.

An analysis of the Turkic republics shows the following trends in women’s education:

In Uzbekistan, women were particularly prominent in pedagogy, medicine, and the humanities. By the 1980s, 60% of teachers were women. In Kazakhstan, the number of female educators and scientists increased fivefold between 1956 and 1986[5].

In Kyrgyzstan, women were particularly prominent in linguistics, history, and pedagogy. In Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, women in science often served as a bridge between the Russified education system and national cultural values. Overall, several obstacles hindered women’s scientific activity during the Soviet period. For example, in the mentality of the Turkic peoples, women’s primary responsibility for household duties often meant that scientific careers were not fully supported[6].Women were compelled to simultaneously manage childcare, household responsibilities, and scientific work[7].

Although the Soviet state partially alleviated this problem through kindergartens, preschool education systems, and legislative benefits, the practical workload for women remained heavy. This situation slowed their professional development.

➡ Furthermore, women’s representation in senior scientific and academic positions remained low;

➡ Opportunities for women to assume leadership roles in research institutes and universities were limited;

➡ conditions for advancing their scientific work were constrained;

➡ and female researchers often faced criticism or undervaluation from some colleagues.

In rural areas, girls had lower access to higher education compared to urban centers. Additionally, local traditional values restricted women’s participation in scientific activities.

In conclusion, the integration of women into the scientific field in the Turkic republics of the Soviet Union during 1945–1991 was the result of a convergence of pedagogical and cultural factors. It is particularly important to note that Soviet pedagogical policies and programs promoting gender equality significantly encouraged women’s enrollment in higher education and scientific work, while the historical and cultural values and educational traditions of the Turkic peoples facilitated the adaptation of this process to local conditions.

Female scholars contributed not only to their personal development but also to society by establishing scientific schools, developing new research directions, and engaging in pedagogical activities. The synergy between Soviet pedagogical policies and the cultural experience of the Turkic peoples ensured the success of women in science, thereby laying a solid foundation for the subsequent development of scientific research in the Turkic republics.

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