

PROBLEMS IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN TURKESTAN AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

Abdurahmonov Shohruh

History teacher at Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract. This article examines the state of the healthcare system in Turkestan during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a period marked by the region's colonization under the Russian Empire. It highlights the significant contributions of the Jadid reformers, who advocated for modernizing various societal sectors, including healthcare. The study explores the emergence of modern medical institutions and the efforts to incorporate advanced medical practices despite the challenges posed by religious conservatism and colonial neglect. Key figures such as Abu Ali ibn Sina and Sayid Islamkhoja are discussed, along with the impact of their work on the local population's health. The article also addresses the influence of foreign medical discoveries and the role of enlightened reformers in improving public health.

Keywords: Turkestan healthcare system, 19th and 20th centuries, Russian Empire colonization, Jadid reformers, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Sayid Islamkhoja, Medical modernization, Public health, Religious conservatism, Foreign medical influence.

Human health stands above everything else. This concept has not lost its significance over centuries. The health of the population is of great importance to the state as well, as a healthy population is a driving force for the state's economy. In the history of Uzbekistan, the science of medicine has been developed since ancient times, with prominent scholars emerging in this field. Notably, Abu Ali ibn Sina's contributions to medical science during the Renaissance period of the 9th to 12th centuries are recognized worldwide. However, not all periods paid equal attention to this field. One such period is the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when Turkestan was under the colonial rule of the Russian Empire.

On one hand, the emergence of modern medical institutions during the Russian Empire's rule in Turkestan was a positive development. For instance, in the 1870s and 1880s, several outpatient clinics were opened for the local population in cities like Tashkent, Samarkand, Jizzakh, and Dushanbe at the initiative of Russian doctors. In 1874, the first modern pharmacy was opened in Tashkent. Interestingly, with the advent of modern pharmacies, local healers began using these medicines for their patients. According to researchers, hospitals started to be established in Turkestan from the 1860s and 1870s. At that time, there were hospitals with 976 beds, 8 pharmacies, 10 feldsher (paramedic) and obstetric departments, and 141 doctors in the region of Uzbekistan, of whom 102 worked in the healthcare sector. Additionally, 234 mid-level medical personnel were employed. The per capita expenditure on healthcare was 13 kopecks.

In the social life of Turkestan at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Jadids played a significant role. During this period, the Jadids paid great attention to the healthcare sector, among other areas, advocating for its fundamental reform in their writings and programs. To this end, they emphasized sending young people to study in the advanced countries of the East and West. For example, the progressive Jadids of Tashkent, mentioned by Abdulla Avloni, opened the Jamiyat-i Khayriya Association. The association's charter, approved on May 12, 1909, consisted of 41 articles and aimed to improve the material and moral conditions of



impoverished and needy Muslims in the province, including opening hospitals, outpatient clinics, tea houses, dining halls, and dormitories, as well as educating young people in schools and sending them abroad for higher education.

Mahmudhoja Behbudiy, the leader of the Central Asian Jadids, also expressed valuable thoughts about the state of healthcare in Turkestan in his works. In his journal "Oyina," Behbudiy wrote about the need for modern Muslim doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers in trade houses, officials in royal offices, judges, notaries, and bankers to improve the situation. Abdulla Avloni, one of the Jadid enlightenment figures, highlighted the importance of physical health in his works. He stated, "A healthy and strong body is essential for a person. Because to study, teach, learn, and educate, a person needs a strong, disease-free body. Those without a healthy body are deficient in their actions and prayers." According to Avloni, a person needs a healthy body to perform all tasks and teach others in society.

The Jadids not only advocated for national treatment methods but also supported using the experiences of developed countries in the world. They were aware of the discoveries made by medical scientists worldwide. For instance, Fitrat's work "Family or Family Management Rules" mentions the discovery made by the English doctor Jenner in 1797, who found that people who contracted cowpox from milking cows were immune to smallpox.

Foreign travelers also wrote about the health problems and various diseases in Turkestan during this period. A Hindu traveler who visited the Bukhara Emirate described the dire state of the military and healthcare sectors. He noted that local doctors lacked knowledge and were unable to treat patients effectively, forcing people to turn to Russian doctors. At the beginning of the 20th century, performing medical procedures on the human body was considered heretical for the local population. This religious bigotry had a negative impact on the healthcare sector.

Sayid Islamkhoja, the Prime Minister of the Khiva Khanate, was another Jadid figure who made significant contributions to healthcare. He initiated and implemented various reforms, including establishing schools, madrasahs, post offices, telegraphs, hospitals, and a grand minaret in Khiva. The hospital built in 1913, which could accommodate 100 patients, was well-equipped for its time. Skilled doctors from Russia were invited to work there, and ordinary people could receive free treatment.

In conclusion, the colonial policies of the Russian Empire left many sectors, including healthcare, lagging behind in Turkestan. The Jadid enlightenment figures strived to develop this sector despite the challenges. Infectious diseases were widespread, causing the population to suffer. Even foreign travelers noted the deficiencies in the healthcare system. The colonial government did not pay adequate attention to the health of the population and the medical sector in Turkestan at that time.

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