



# **ETHNOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF UZBEK GIRLS-REARING PRACTICES IN POST-SOVIET UZBEKISTAN**

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## **Annotation**

This article analyzes the issue of raising girls in Uzbek families during the Soviet era from a historical and anthropological perspective. The study sheds light on the changes in family values, the reshaping of gender roles, and the impact of socio-spiritual factors on the upbringing of girls on a scientific basis. Based on archival documents, period literature, statistical data, and modern ethnographic observations, the transformations that occurred in the upbringing of girls as a result of Soviet policy are revealed. The relationship between national traditions and new socio-cultural trends introduced by the state is also scientifically discussed. The results of the article serve to deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics of raising girls in Uzbek society between nationality and modernity.

**Keywords:** raising girls, Soviet era, family, national values, gender, social transformation.

## **Introduction**

The Soviet era was a period of fundamental socio-cultural changes for Uzbek society. The transformations that occurred in the political system, economic relations, and social institutions during the colonial period also directly affected family life and the process of raising children. Previously, women were mainly engaged in household chores, but now they were first attracted to day and evening schools, factories, and enterprises, which led to fundamental changes in national values, customs, religious traditions, family relationships, and roles. Now, since women's labor is used so much in social life, it seems that they have somewhat deviated from their important work, such as raising children. Children spent their days in kindergartens, mothers spent their days in factories, and child rearing was organized mainly in state institutions. This led to a change in roles in families and a retreat of traditional values in raising children.

Although this period is well-covered historically, and this issue has been studied in some aspects in the disciplines of ethnology and anthropology, the ethnological analysis of the upbringing process in Uzbek families during the Soviet period has not been sufficiently studied in general. Therefore, this topic is scientifically relevant and serves as an important source in understanding national identity, cultural continuity, and social development.

The main goal of this study is to analyze the experiences of raising children in Uzbek families during the Soviet period from an ethnological perspective. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set:

1. To shed light on the historical and traditional foundations of upbringing in Uzbek families and their transformation in the post-independence period.



2. To identify the specific features of upbringing given to girls and boys in terms of gender relations and child socialization.

3. To analyze the transition of labor upbringing from the Soviet period to the conditions of a market economy and changes in family practices.

4. Studying the role of moral values, religious views and rituals in child rearing on an ethnological basis.

This study uses modern methodological approaches from the disciplines of ethnology and anthropology to study child rearing practices in Uzbek families in the post-Soviet period. The source and methodological basis of the study are ethnographic materials; information on modern family life obtained through field observations, conversations and interviews, folklore; analysis of upbringing motifs in folk proverbs, fairy tales, songs, ritual texts and other folklore samples, historical and archival documents, local and foreign research in ethnology, anthropology and sociology.

### **Main part.**

In the post-Soviet period, significant transformations were observed in the family institution. The extended family model, widespread during the Soviet period, gradually transitioned to the nuclear family. This process was closely related to the colonial period, economic conditions, urbanization and migration factors. As a result, the direct participation of the older generation (grandparents) in raising children decreased, and more responsibility fell on the shoulders of parents. This, along with the strengthening of an individual approach to upbringing, led to a reduction in traditional forms of upbringing.

Our people did not exclude religion in raising children, but on the contrary, they used religious rules to form their moral qualities. In the Soviet period, based on the idea that religion is the opium of the people [2;25], religious and national views were taken into account in order to create a single Russian nation from all the nations that were part of the Soviet Union, and this was especially applied to raising children. Realizing the importance of the role of the mother in raising children, attempts were made to “liberate” mothers from such an important task as raising children, to involve them in social work, and to keep children away from various superstitions that could melt their brains by attracting them to kindergartens before they could understand their minds [2;25]. As a result, mothers abandoned their important task of raising children and began to distance themselves from them spiritually. This, of course, had an impact on the upbringing of children.

For this, it was necessary, first of all, to separate women, who were considered the main educators in the family, from the family, especially from the children. At the same time, the most rational way to use their labor was to attract them to schools. For this purpose, 17 classes were organized in the Russian school established in Termez in 1921, and 210 out of a total of 505 students were girls [9; 41]. Since the education of boys and girls together was initially alien to the Uzbek people, schools or classes were organized separately. In 1925, a separate girls' school was established in Termez, and in the first years the number of girls was 32, but later this number increased. The fact that similar schools were established in all regions [9; 41] indicates that the essence of the issue is profound.

During the colonial period, the ancient customs and rituals of the Uzbek people related to raising children were banned and new ones were forcibly introduced instead. For example, marriage and happiness palaces were built, and ceremonies related to the birth of a child and marriage began to be held. One of these was the ceremony of presenting a birth certificate to a

child upon his birth. If earlier the child was placed in a cradle, now the cradle was considered an old-fashioned thing, and it was promoted to put them in beds. Such ceremonies were mainly held in the “House of Happiness”, and initially representatives of the parents’ colleagues and a pediatrician were invited. After everyone gathered, the baby was taken to the hall where the ceremonial registration ceremony was held, the name, surname and patronymic given to him were solemnly announced, and the relatives congratulated and applauded [6; 18]. Then the baby was placed in a specially made cravat on the happiness carpet. The relatives congratulated the parents and gave them gifts. In this way, new customs, alien to the Uzbek people, began to enter.

According to the traditions of Eastern upbringing, the father had a high place in the family. Men were engaged in the economic provision of the family, and women in household chores and raising children, but now the roles are gradually changing. The social status of Uzbek women, which had been shaped over the centuries by certain customs and Islamic religious criteria, was violated by extraordinary actions under the slogan of liberating them, especially as a result of the “Attack” movement that broke out in 1927 [11; 55]. Cases of gross interference in family and marital relations increased. Also, on December 19, 1917, the law on the annulment of marriage was introduced, according to which parental consent was no longer required for marriage [11; 66]. According to the decree of 1921, the marriageable age for girls was set at 16 years. In addition, in the Women's Soviets, which were established to educate women ideologically, issues such as morality and culture, women's hygiene, family and marriage, modest clothing, the spiritual image of girls, and livelihood were discussed [10; 12], and evenings and meetings were held on topics such as “friendship between a girl and a boy” that determined this spiritual image [10; 12], which also caused a fundamental change in the girls' views, such as oriental modesty. During the cotton harvest or after the establishment of collective farms, women and girls were appointed as heads of hectares of land, and with their help the “Cotton Policy” was skillfully implemented. In various periodicals, their work was praised, praised, and shown as an example for other women. The article titled “Forty Women's Sarvari” also highlights the efforts of a girl named Mubarak, who lives and works on the “Lelingrad” collective farm in the Khojaabad district of Andijan region. She is said to have trained as a mechanist and harvested 300 tons of cotton [12; 7]. Similarly, Jamila, who lives in the Ellikkala district, was able to harvest 200-300 tons of “white gold” [7; 8]. The question arises, were women aware of the health contraindications to performing these tasks, and did they know what the consequences would be? The answers to such questions are hidden.

Also, the involvement in types of work that are not typical for girls led to their further departure from feminine elegance. In particular, when we talk about the professions of girls during this period, it became common for them to be trained for professions such as machinist, machinist-engineer [5; 5], and sniper. At the same time, girls were also encouraged through the periodical press to stay and work on collective farms in villages after graduating from school. For example, in the article “I am a collective farmer” by Sanobar Teshaboyeva, she emphasizes that working on a collective farm is a matter of pride and honor, and how many people have died for the collective farm [8; 30]. Articles similar to this article can be found in many places, and they also have the same content.

These circumstances lead to a breakdown in the religious and moral values of Uzbek girls and an increase in the work of women in the family compared to men. This, of course, leads to the fact that, first of all, in terms of health, there is almost no time left for raising children. Z. Pukhova talks about this in her report at the All-Union Conference of Soviet Women entitled



“Should Women Be Returned to the Home?”, where she talks about the serious consequences of not taking care of women and not devoting time to raising children [4; 8]. Although this can be said to be a truth that was realized late. At the same time, the whole world understands that according to Eastern family traditions, there is no more important work than raising children.

## **Discussion.**

The Soviet era had a dramatic impact on the system of raising girls in Uzbek families. This can be assessed both positively and negatively. During this period, traditional family values and the modernization policy of the state created contradictory processes. While in traditional family education, the main task of a girl child was to prepare her for household chores, morality, and future responsibility as a mother, the Soviet authorities sought to educate girls, involve them in production, and instill the ideas of gender equality.

The “Attack” campaign, launched in 1927, was one of the most important political processes in this regard, aiming to abolish the veil, involve women in public life, and encourage girls to get an education. These reforms turned the education of girls in a new direction, and now girls were prepared not only for household chores, but also for active participation in public life.

However, these changes were not uniform. Although girls’ education developed more rapidly in urban areas, resistance was strong in rural areas. Some families did not want to send their daughters to school, continuing to marry them off early. As a result, the upbringing of girls during the Soviet period was shaped in opposite directions: on the one hand, the state’s modernization policy, and on the other, the preservation of family traditions. Ethnological analysis shows that the Soviet Union’s intervention in the sphere of rituals in Central Asia and the Soviet Union as a whole was twofold: on the one hand, it consisted in the destruction of existing religious rituals and, at the same time, the creation of a Bolshevik ritual system [1; 329]. This is accompanied by a division of girls’ upbringing in families into two poles during the Soviet period. First of all, the ideas of modernity and gender equality were to raise girls as literate, socially active, and labor-intensive individuals. The second is the continuation of traditional values, that is, preparing girls for morality and family responsibilities or educating them in a spirit of loyalty to the Soviet government. This situation has given rise to mixed views on the upbringing of girls.

This legacy is still felt today. During the period of independence, the upbringing of girls developed based on national values and religious traditions, but the value of emphasizing education and professional development, which was inherited from the Soviet era, is still strong. Therefore, we can say that the Soviet era marked a turning point in the upbringing of girls, causing a new harmony between tradition and modernization, but modernity prevailed.

## **Conclusion**

The Soviet era brought about a fundamental change in the upbringing of girls in Uzbekistan. During this period, the ideas of education, literacy and gender equality were widely spread through state policy, and girls began to be actively involved in public life. At the same time, the process of preparing traditional values, morality and family responsibilities also retained its strength. As a result, the upbringing of girls was formed in a balance between two directions - modernization and tradition. Ethnological analysis shows that this “mixed model” created during the Soviet era has left its mark on modern educational practice. Today, in the upbringing of girls in Uzbek families, attention is paid to education, profession and social activity on the one hand, and loyalty to national and religious values is being strengthened on the other. Thus, the legacy of the Soviet era can be considered an important historical stage that



determined the specific national and cultural manifestations of the upbringing of girls in modern Uzbek society.

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