THE EDUCATION SYSTEM DURING THE ERA OF THE KHANATES: THE ACTIVITIES OF MAKHTABS AND MADRASAS

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the formation and development of the education system within the Khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, which existed in Central Asia between the 16th and 19th centuries. The study examines the role of "maktabs" (primary schools) and "madrasas" (higher educational institutions) in society, the content of education, the subjects taught, the activities of instructors ("mudarris") and students, and the interplay between religious and secular knowledge. While "maktabs" functioned as primary education institutions during the era of the Khanates, "madrasas" served as centers for advanced education and scholarly training. The distinctive features of educational institutions in the regions of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand are examined based on historical sources and contemporary research.

Keywords: Khanates, Bukhara, Khiva, Kokand, education, student, religious education, enlightenment.

Introduction

In the history of Central Asia, the era of the khanates is distinguished not only by political and social developments but also by the advancement of science, culture, and education. Within the territories of the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates, the primary forms of education were centered around "maktabs" (primary schools) and *madrasas* (higher religious schools). These educational institutions played a vital role in fostering literacy among the population, imparting religious knowledge, and training scholars and educators.

Historical records indicate that "madrasa" education in Central Asia dates back to ancient times; for instance, Muhammad Narshakhi's work "The History of Bukhara" contains references to the Farjak Madrasa in Bukhara. In subsequent centuries, centers of education and scholarship also flourished in regions such as Samarkand, Nasaf, Termez, Fergana, and Khorezm.

Main Body

During the era of the khanates, "maktabs" (traditional primary schools) constituted the foundational level of the education system. Instruction in these schools focused primarily on teaching children literacy, Quranic recitation, writing, and basic religious knowledge. Research concerning primary education in the Emirate of Bukhara has specifically analyzed these schools, their

material conditions, the textbooks employed, and the challenges inherent in the educational process. Studies note that following initial primary instruction and the completion of the Quran, students utilized educational texts such as “Chor Kitob” and, subsequently, “Sufi Olloyor”.

Young people who had completed their schooling or possessed sufficient preparation had the opportunity to study at madrasas. Madrasas functioned not only as institutions for imparting religious knowledge but also as centers for the study of specific scientific disciplines. Research dedicated to the history of Bukhara’s madrasas provides information regarding their educational content, curricula, textbooks, and the organization of the educational process.

Alongside religious subjects, certain rational and exact sciences were also taught in madrasas. Studies focusing on the madrasas of the Khiva and Kokand Khanates mention disciplines such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *hadith*, Sharia sciences, mathematics, and geometry. Madrasas in Khiva, such as the Sherghozikhan and Muhammad Niyoz Devonbegi, are also highlighted as important centers of education and scholarly activity.

Schools and madrasas formed the core of the educational system in the Khiva Khanate as well. The operation, material support, and educational content of these institutions played a significant role, particularly during the reign of Muhammad Rahimkhan II (Feruz). Modern research has examined the role of these educational institutions in societal life during that period, drawing upon historical sources and chronicles from the era of the Khanate.

Schools and madrasas also operated in the Kokand Khanate. Through these educational institutions, students acquired not only religious knowledge but also certain forms of secular knowledge. In this regard, limiting the education system within the territories of the khanates solely to religious education fails to capture the full scope of the historical process. Modern research highlights the role of madrasas in scientific and social life, extending beyond religious knowledge.

When evaluating the education system of the Khanate era, it is essential to consider the historical context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By this time, the issue of adapting the curricula and teaching methods of traditional schools and madrasas to the evolving needs of society had become a pressing matter. In particular, within the intellectual circles of Bukhara, enlightened figures such as Sadriddin Ayni and Abdurauf Fitrat criticized certain shortcomings of the traditional education system. Sadriddin Ayni’s work “Memoirs” (“Esdaliklar”) serves as a vital source for studying education, student life, and the social environment within Bukhara’s madrasas. According to his accounts, classes in these madrasas ran from September 22 to March 22; instruction generally took place four days a week, with three days designated as

rest days. Typically, the entire course of study spanned eighteen to nineteen years.

The management system of the madrasas is also noteworthy. The supreme ruler stood at the pinnacle of the administrative hierarchy. “Waqf” (endowment) documents pertaining to madrasas were frequently validated by the ruler's seal. The “qazi” (judge) was responsible for establishing and overseeing the “waqf” system, which played a crucial role in the madrasa's economic support; this function constituted the second tier of the management hierarchy. “Waqf” documents were formalized by the “qozi” and invariably authenticated with a seal. “Sadrs” also held a significant position within the educational administration system. In the case of Bukhara, for instance, they managed administrative and economic matters for educational institutions located within a “farsakh” (a unit of distance) of the city center. They received a fee known as “sadrona” from certain madrasas in exchange for their services. The “mutavalli” (administrator) played a central role in managing the educational process. The “mutavalli” was responsible for the interactions between the madrasa where they served and the state officials involved in the education sector. Typically, the name of the person overseeing the educational process was recorded in the “waqf” document. This document clearly defined the madrasa's operations and specified the “mutavalli's” share of the income generated from the “waqf” property.

Conclusion

In summary, during the era of the khanates, the education system in Central Asia operated primarily through “maktabs” and “madrasas”. While “maktabs” functioned as institutions providing basic literacy and religious instruction, “madrasas” served as centers for higher-level education, scholarly training, and the deepening of religious knowledge. Although the education systems in the Khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand differed slightly due to local historical and social conditions, “maktabs” and “madrasas” played a significant role in the spiritual and intellectual life of society in all of them.

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