

Rus Schools Established In Turkestan

Mavluda Saxobidinova

Assistant, Olmaliq State Technical Institute

Abstract

This thesis analyzes the history of primary and secular schools established under the Russian administration in Turkestan in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. It examines schools designed for both local and Russian populations across different regions, their organizational structures, curricula, and teacher-related issues. The study also draws on the research of M. I. Brodovskiy and N. O. Rozenbakh to discuss the effectiveness and limitations of Russian education for the local population. Findings indicate that curricula, which did not consider the mother tongue, and the insufficient linguistic preparation of teachers prevented Russian schools from achieving the expected literacy levels among the local population. Consequently, the thesis demonstrates the significance of this period as a preparatory stage for the development of Russian-native schools and later Jadid schools in the educational history of Turkestan.

Keywords: Turkestan, Russian schools, local population education, primary literacy, curriculum, linguistic challenges, Jadid schools, 19th-century educational history, Rozenbakh, Brodovskiy.

Even before the formal establishment of the Russian administration in Turkestan, the first secular schools began to appear. In 1860, primary schools opened in 1st fortress (present-day Kazalinsk) and Perovsk (Kyzyl-Orda) on the initiative of local clergy. These schools taught reading and writing, the “Law of God” (religion), and the four operations of arithmetic to both boys and girls.

In 1862, under a special regulation approved by the Orenburg and Samara Governor-General Byezák, these schools were reorganized in 1863 in Perovsk and in 1865 in Kazalinsk as “Kyrgyz schools” (primarily boarding schools for Kazakh and Kyrgyz boys). Each school provided a dormitory for 25 Kyrgyz students, while Russian boys were admitted as “guests.” Classes were usually conducted by local Kyrgyz teachers who had graduated from the Neplyuyev Cadet Corps in Orenburg.

In subsequent years, Russian primary schools opened in Namangan, Osh, Kokand (now part of Fergana region), as well as in Jizzakh, Pskent, Tashkent, and Merke; additional evening literacy courses were also organized. Mixed-gender church schools were established in Osh, Kokand, Namangan, and Andijan for Orthodox communities, and evening classes for adults were opened in some cities.

Two types of Russian schools emerged based on the needs of the local Russian population:

1. Schools limited to primary education for children of ordinary worker-peasant families;
2. Preparatory institutions for children of administrative officials, merchants, and the middle and upper classes, directing them to gymnasiums or secondary schools.

In 1871, the Turkestan administration developed a project for comprehensive reform of public education and submitted it to the Military Minister for legal approval. The plan envisaged opening a male gymnasium in Tashkent aligned with the Ministry of Public Education’s regulations, admitting children of Russian citizens and foreigners on an equal basis. The gymnasium included a three-year teacher seminary, an associated model school, and a boarding facility with 50 places—20 for Russian children preparing for the seminary and 30 for local children attending primary schools[3].

Public schools were categorized into:

1. District schools with a four-year general curriculum and handicraft classes;
2. Primary literacy schools for nomadic populations in steppe regions.

Under the initiative of Major-General Abramov and the Governor-General's approval, several local and Russian schools were opened in the Zarafshan district. For instance, in 1870, a school teaching Russian to local children in Samarkand; in 1871, a literacy school for Russian children of Samarkand; in 1872, a primary school for Russian children in Kattaqurgan; and in 1874, another primary school for local children in the Amu Darya region. The 1871 public education project laid an important foundation for the network of modern secular schools in Turkestan [1].

The issue of late introduction of Russian education among the local population was central to the work of M. I. Brodovskiy's commission. The commission initially assumed that sedentary Uzbeks (Sarts) and nomadic Kyrgyz could not study together, proposing higher district schools for sedentary populations and lower literacy schools for nomads. Over time, it became clear that these assumptions were mistaken, demonstrating the need to establish higher-level institutions for nomads and the possibility of joint education for Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in central areas.

N. O. Rozenbakh's research confirmed that Russian schools for the local population failed to achieve the expected results due to three main factors:

1. Curriculum mismatch: City Russian school programs were too complex for local students in terms of language and cultural context;
2. Ineffective literacy instruction in Russian rather than the mother tongue;
3. Teachers' insufficient linguistic competence, causing communication barriers and reducing both educational effectiveness and student motivation.

Thus, as Rozenbakh noted, failure to adapt curricula, lack of mother-tongue support, and inadequate teacher preparation for the local linguistic and cultural environment prevented Russian schools from improving genuine literacy among the local population [2].

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