

THE PROBLEM OF RELIGION IN THE MODERN SYSTEM OF SECULAR EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses some of the inherent difficulties in improving the quality of higher education in the context of the globalization of innovative technologies. The authors conclude that education primarily impacts the formation of a personality through certain ideological images, i.e., the religious and the secular, but modern schools and universities strive to educate without developing the faith, hope and conscience of their students. Thus, the moral education of younger generations is a decisive condition for the success of the educational policy in Uzbekistan. The novelty of the article is that by underscoring the extremely urgent problems of moral education in the CIS countries, it bridges a research gap that stems from extant fundamental studies, which do not provide comprehensive answers regarding students' choices of educational positions. Accordingly, this article focuses on the formation of actual worldviews and human moral positions in Uzbekistan. In the Uzbek system of education, historical traditions are preserved but are overshadowed by secular teaching that undermines the educational paradigm of high mortality among students.

Key words: Modern education, traditions and innovations, study and teaching of religion, religious culture, confessional and etnoconfessional, tolerance in teaching religion.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problems of education are a traditional topical topic of scientific and theoretical analysis and are commonly discussed in research on reforming educational paradigms and updating positions in the field of the moral education of young people. At one time, BT Ligachev noted that "... all attention was focused on such problems as the class essence of morality, patriotism and internationalism... they not only overshadowed, but completely displaced from the consciousness of children and adults the eternal and ineradicable universal human spiritual phenomena and values ..." [1, p.3].

The study of religion in the educational system is the subject of research in the social sciences on new socioeconomic and cultural paradigms of educational policy. Sociological analyses of scientific research have shown that most studies are focused on whether the ideological struggle over the minds of people is an effective form of influencing the ideologies of women and students. They show that ideological centres and missionary societies are equipped with the achievements of information technology and possess an unprecedented ability to transmit any information, representing serious threats to young people. Thus, scientists admit that it is possible to ensure the inviolability of the borders of sovereign states. In addition to these ideological impacts, complications have accumulated in the educational policies of the past, such as the threats of religious extremism and terrorism and the realities and challenges of the development of globalization, spreading the ideas of the spiritual decay into public life. [2; 3; 4.]

The formulation of the problem of moral enlightenment in the scientific literature entails several directions and positions. The first is the most similar to this paper's topics (L. Burdyakova, S. Divnogortseva, A. Korzhenko, L. Serikova, F. Mezhidova), which include the spiritual bankruptcy of youth, the role of religious enlightenment (V. Dorofeev, G. Geranina, G. Demidov, I. Pibaev, E. Miroshnikova, N. Troshina) in secular education, and some examples of spiritual and moral education in European countries (A. Vitamir, E. Razbaeva, M. Shakhnovich, T. Jenson).

Events in the Republic of Uzbekistan have shown that the most dangerous threat is the neo-Wahhabist movement, which pursued the goal of a political coup in the Fergana Valley to establish a kind of caliphate called the Fergana Emirate. Sociological analyses have shown that modern radicalism chooses a "soft" methodology of a promising nature that teaches and prepares primary school children for extremism [5]. Thus, through the ideological trend of teaching children Arabic to read the Koran, radical Islam can be inserted into the worldview of primary school children, in contrast to the religious enlightenment of youth and an upbringing with a high culture of tolerance.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of this work was, first of all, the ideas of humanism in the spiritual and moral education of younger generations in the classic works of universal and national pedagogy (J. Locke, J. J. Rousseau, V. A. Sukhomlinsky, A. S. Makarenko, A. R. Beruni, A. N. Farabi, A. Navoi, M. Koshgari, etc.). The principle of a humanized educational policy presupposes the spiritual and moral education of young people, which influences their ethno-national identity and defines how they view the meaning of human life.

Other basic research methodologies were deduction and induction, analysis and synthesis, which we used to identify education as a factor in the formation of a civic position regarding the principles of the unity of "the secular and the religious". The contrast between the secular and the religious in an educational environment creates an unsatisfied need in young people for the formation and development of a spiritual life, since any specific transfer of religious knowledge is considered an erroneous approach to the educational methods of schools and universities.

Finally, the main methodological guideline of this work was the priority of a person's self-interest. A person's self-embodies the highest values of the freedom of conscience in public life, and that freedom is not only socioeconomic but also rests on the spiritual and moral foundations of one's education and upbringing.

3. RESULTS OF RESEARCH: RELIGIOUS AND SECOND

International tensions and the aggravations of ideological problems pose new obstacles to improving educational policy or introducing educational innovations to train highly qualified personnel with high spiritual competencies. The concept we have developed for improving the spiritual and moral education of student youth in Uzbekistan's system of school and vocational education includes the following:

- a social and humanitarian course in the educational policy of CIS governments based on the supremacy of human interests, the centuries-old universal human tradition of spiritual and moral culture, the need for cooperation between the religious and the secular, religious spirituality and civic ethics, and the transfer of knowledge of true religious values, which comprise the norms of upbringing;

- tolerance of science and religion in the educational environment, i.e., a scientific substantiation of combinations of the religious and the secular in the development of universal ethnocultural paradigms in the context of polyculturalism;

- creation of favourable conditions for the cooperation of confessional and nonconfessional aspects in distance education, based on the rights of equality and freedom and the right to choose the spiritual and moral guidelines for student youth;

- a guarantee of the right to religious education both in school and later, in all stages of the education system, as a guarantee of the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens;

- interactions based on the principles of dialogue between the state and religious organizations to foster a harmonious personality, which should contribute to ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens, to form a highly spiritual and moral youth culture; and

- an outline of the contours of the study and teaching of religion in the ethnocultural lives of the peoples of Muslim sections of the CIS, which is currently difficult, if not impossible. This complicates the study and teaching of religion at school and universities, given the new edition of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "On freedom of conscience and religious organizations." An example of this is the exposure of the hujras (i.e., illegal teaching of Arab literacy and religious morality) that have taken place in the Fergana Valley and other regions of the country. Apparently, the time has come for the state, rather than informal imams and suspicious private teachers, to oversee the confessional education of young people by legalizing it.

The most important method of exerting ideological influence on children remains the upbringing of a true Muslim, creating a fighter for the "purity of Islam" and the elimination of negative phenomena in Uzbekistan's social life. The determinants of the attractiveness of religious enlightenment in khujras for children have been parental consent, a lack of attention in secular schools, the propensity of children studying true Islam to self-identify with their personality, and a lack of understanding in children's home environment. In some cases, the reasons for visiting a khujra for religious education were, as noted by some children, social problems in their family caused by a market economy.

For the confidentiality of religious hujras, a secret system has been organized, and a special technology has been developed for recruiting new primary school students, i.e., instilling fanaticism in classrooms by using cruel pedagogy with corporal punishment and hunger. The teachers generally did not have pedagogical education or psychological experience working with primary school children. Notably, the children actively possessed educational materials, endured corporal punishment, did not miss "classes", achieved good literacy in a short time, studied the calligraphy of the Arabic alphabet and read texts, and demonstrated fostered high discipline and morality, which would be desirable in our secular education system [6, p. 90].

Pedagogical experiences in the post-Soviet era have shown that in the process of the formation of national moral enlightenment, the communist practice of education was abandoned, although its educational system of councils was one of the greatest achievements of world civilization. Thus, we can talk about the effectiveness of education only with the ideological support of teaching and education in schools and universities, which liberated modern education and upbringing from the values of religious or secular faith and conscience. Thus, in the Uzbek educational system, form prevails over meaning; in many cases, the scientific (or rather atheistic) foundations of the formation of the worldview of young people continue.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The modern Uzbek education system should be determined by the orientation of the secular or religious education of student youth, that is, the state education system, which presupposes the formation of a scientific worldview and allows

alternatives to religious spirituality. As we assume, the educational policies of the governments of CIS countries face a serious dilemma, since it is impossible to educate scientifically and develop students' main personality without faith and conscience. We completely agree with A. L. Korzhenko, who in highlights that the following problems: "1. The formation and development of a democratic society takes place without focusing on value priorities; 2. The general chaos of these processes; 3. Versatility of value orientations in the mass consciousness of young people; 4. Lack of opportunities to realize the value orientations of young people leads to the disintegration of the spiritual formations of young people"[7, p. 33].

The current practices and the situation in the education system testify to the need to increase reforms to prioritize the humanization of the educational process to develop the civic qualities of students more than their professional skills. In line with such considerations, we suggest that the solutions to the divides between teachers and students are convergence and a unity of spirituality in the "objects and subjects of education". These will become effective means not only in schools but also in further educational stages of youth.

The keys to improving teaching and educational work are new goals and approaches to the formation of conviction, faith and conscience in the personality of adolescent students. In the Uzbek system of education, there are pragmatic approaches to oriented pedagogy on preparing students for admission to universities that are based on the prestige and rating of a school. We concluded that the humanization of the educational system is required to foster the harmony of civic qualities in future professionals, giving them a high morality with a subtle aesthetic soul that is based on true humanism.

We cannot agree with those authors who advocate the introduction of innovative technologies in global pedagogy without accounting for the real situations and national characteristics of the modern educational process [8]. It seems to us that the introduction of any innovation requires specific educational grounds for effective educational activities, i.e., the readiness to accept new forms and methods of influence by the subjects and objects of the educational process. Otherwise, the results may be reversed. This approach does not advocate the thesis of rejection of advanced educational technologies that aim at improving the practical qualities of higher education.

In a market economy, a bold solution to a deprivatized education system is the application of the principles of a market economy, which offers the services of tutors to high school students. We assume that there is a need for an unbiased, objective sociological study of modern pedagogy in the context of school education and at the university level to identify the main directions for a strategy of action to address the organizational problems in the educational process.

The main element of "smart education" should be morality, which can ensure the effectiveness of pedagogical education and its impact on the professionalization of young people. It is the priority of upbringing that determines the motivation for learning and obtaining a decent education through both school and higher professional education, which, in Uzbekistan, best shapes scientific thinking by introducing the rich, centuries-old national culture of the people, with its ethno-confessional traditions and values of upbringing a healthy generation. Thus, post-Soviet pedagogy is the pedagogy of searching for new standards and principles of socialization and professionalization of the youth. Thus, education remains the most important value for the socialization of the younger generations, a decisive factor in the development of youth policy in Uzbekistan.

During the implementation of state policy by the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to increase the spirituality of the youth, both the strength and conditions of invincibility were focused on in the education system to fill gaps in upbringing and to overcome the immunity of confrontation in the destructive ideas of youth. Thus, the problem of personnel policy arose; in the past, most male teachers went into the fields of business and entrepreneurship. This led to the domination of mass female pedagogy in the school system, which could not affect the quality of the educational process.

Morality of a secular nature also presupposes the true values of human independence, the highest spiritual and aesthetic norms and values of an individual. In turn, it is necessary to stipulate that the priority of secular morality is the true idea of tolerance, which presupposes the rule of law, guarantees the rights and freedoms of a citizen and the respect for the faiths and views of others, and assures a readiness for dialogue and social cooperation for the common good, as well as a broad outlook on life based on mutual respect for all subjects of the relationship. Here, we discuss the introduction of religious education in secular state and university education.

Russian scientists are absolutely right: a certain tension in relations between the state and religion still remains, although since 2012, a number of practical programs have been implemented to incorporate curricula of religious teachings and upbringing in the education system. In fact, this problem cannot be the subject of discussion on the transfer of knowledge about religion, since the Toledo principle, "an international document dedicated to religious education in a secular society, defines religious education as the transfer of knowledge about religion, that is, a confessional, nonbiased approach to research and transfer of knowledge about religion(s)"[9, p. 2].

Based on the international experience of confessional and nonconfessional education, the well-known teacher Miroshnikova E.M. proposes a model that "mixed two in one ... On the example of the implementation of the ORCE subject area, this is quite obvious: the confessional model is presented in four courses (fundamentals of Orthodox culture, the foundations of Islamic culture, Buddhist culture, the foundations of Jewish culture), the nonconfessional model is presented by two courses (the foundations of the cultures of world religions and the foundations of secular ethics)"[14, p.2]. Notably, the relations between the state and religious organizations are improving and the

governments of CIS countries, including Uzbekistan's, have begun practical interactions in the field of their republics' spiritual and moral policies.

The need for religious education in Muslim countries stems from the moral enlightenment of young people who M.O. They are susceptible to the propaganda of religious extremism, the ideologists of which skilfully use the ideological dissatisfaction and religious incompetence of the youth "audience"[6, 101]. Thus, religious education is the most important condition for the reliable deradicalization of not only Islamic but also other religious student youth who are recruited to replenish extremist groups.

In turn, the modern education system, when introducing religious education from the point of view of "study" or "teaching", must observe the best features of the current laws in each country, which should have been founded on a "golden mean", since religious studies, in a certain sense, need "cooperation" from theology. We do not agree with those authors who argue that the secular nature of education entails an atheistic education, e.g., exclusionary public propaganda of religion and separation of the state from religion. In this regard, we agree with K. A. Pisenko, who claims that secularism "... presupposes organic interaction and cooperation between the state and traditional religious confessions in accordance with the confessional choice of its citizens, including in such an important sphere of public life as education" [10, p.182].

In the scientific literature, there are other proposals for teaching religion as "law—the approach that is most familiar to domestic pedagogy. The very name of the subject taught in the pre-revolutionary school—'God's Law'—contained an indication of its doctrinal and law-positive character. Teaching religion as a fact is an expression already in international use today. It presupposes a detached, 'objective and scientific' study of the phenomenon of religion and corresponds to what is called teaching about religion"[11, p. 233].

M. Shakhnovich, analysing the problems teaching religion at school in modern Europe, comes to the conclusion that "... they reflect not only an increase in religious diversity in Europe but also pluralism in approaches to teaching about this religious diversity, supported by European international political institutions, as well as the desire of these institutions to strengthen through the formation of European identity and common European values, first of all, democracy, religious freedom and tolerance"[12, p. 44].

The example of religious education in public schools in Europe allows T. Jenson to conclude that national education, "to instill the ideas and ideals of this state in its future citizens...means teaching a common language, a common history and a common heritage, for example, literary or artistic, or the teaching of a common (state) religion, as well as values based on it... It is exactly the same in European countries that continue to stubbornly hold on to the confessional RO"[13, p. 69].

We consider it right in many areas of education to ignore any current legislation regarding the most complete transfer of knowledge about religion to the younger generation, as in Italy. Religious education in the countries of the Muslim part of the post-Soviet regions needs to combine confessional and nonconfessional aspects, since religious fundamentalists actively promote and are making progress in teaching young people militant Islamic ideals. In the context of globalization and information technology, especially with the problems of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, student youth have remained outside the walls of schools and universities, which is convenient for religious missionaries.

Any confessional and nonconfessional forms of education proposed by teachers have a degree of artificiality, i.e., formality, which does not always correspond to objective reality. Some considerations that are based on emotionality, giving priority to teaching religion rather than studying it, may appear to positively impact the spiritual and moral education of young people in the system of traditional education. We believe that the authors are right who, following T. Jenson, argue that the study of religion will allow religion "to return...to its rightful and original place in the education system... [i.e.,] to social significance, to use the richest spiritual heritage of the religious tradition of our Fatherland to promote harmonious development the younger generation, educating the best spiritual qualities, satisfying the spiritual quests of young souls with the time-tested truths of the religious Faith, which has given our Fatherland and the whole world examples of holiness, devoted service to the Motherland, creative, including artistic and scientific inspiration"[14; eleven; 15; ten; 12].

Even more controversial is the issue of separating the secular and the religious, i.e., the separation of religious organizations and the state, based on the current legislation "On freedom of conscience and religious organizations", and the obligation to obtain parental consent. Teachers who put forward a nonconfessional study of religion most likely pay attention to the course "Ethics of spiritual and moral education and religious culture." In our opinion, the problems of religious education should be considered in the context of more fundamentally promising strategies of educational policies in the countries of the Muslim region in the CIS. Thus, it is natural to consider the complications of both globalization and information paradigms and the obvious dissatisfaction with the religious enlightenment of young people.

Obviously, in modern pedagogy, religious education is an important part of the educational social policy of the governments of the CIS, and the need for it stems from preventing religious extremism, entailing study of the determining factors for the formation of moral immunity. It is necessary to improve the existing paradigms in society that designate the freedom of conscience and religious organizations. The freedom of conscience should not exclude teaching religion in public schools and universities, since Islam, unlike other world religions, is a more social culture. It is not only a religion but also a code of life that fosters a righteous lifestyle of spiritual and moral behaviours.

It is also obvious that today, an analysis of the introduction of religious education is crucial, given the modernization of the educational process in Uzbekistan and the attempts to radicalize the religious situation in its education system amidst the ongoing distance education of students.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

In Uzbekistan, the state is the most important institution of socialization and professionalization of the younger generations; by law, it determines the strategy of actions in the field of the spiritual and moral education of students. The state has priority in the formation of spiritual culture and education of the population, financing the socioeconomic and cultural life of society. The primary purpose of religious education is to preserve and enrich the centuries-old national spiritual and moral heritage of the people, which also serves as the basis for the "moral immunity" of student youth from religious fundamentalism and extremism.

Morality and ethical education in the context of globalization and information technology is gaining special relevance for education systems in Central Asia and the Russian Federation, where the formation of scientific thinking and a healthy worldview is impossible without the moral education of young people, i.e., a moral education that forms deep faith in true Islamic values, ideals, and behavioral norms to motivate creative works by activating youth to achieve a high professionalization of modern civilization and embody a spirit of patriotism and a sense of responsibility for the future of Uzbekistan.

Morality, i.e., faith, hope, and conscience, is the most important factor in the civic position of modern youth, a necessary quality of personality upbringing for the development of civil society that ensures the sustainable social progress of Uzbekistan. Thus, the craving for Islamic literacy, for learning Arabic writing to read the Koran, is identified with the historical spiritual and moral values and national culture of the peoples of the East.

Enlightenment of the youth in the CIS countries must be built on the principles of consolidation of the forces that facilitate the implementation of the concept of "enlightenment against ignorance", i.e., ethno-confessional programs informed by tolerance ("You have your faith, and I have my faith!") to increase levels of scientific and technological progress. Apparently, the time has come to consider updating the religious education and enlightenment of young people. In recent years, dramatic events related to Islam have arisen due to the specific lack of Islamic enlightenment and the dissatisfaction of young people, who have fallen into the traps of extremists. Accordingly, education remains the only form of overcoming the intensification of religious decay of public life, i.e., the formation of informal religious groups and schools that teach terror.

It is natural, for a person of high morality, that any education should prioritize a program of high spirituality that contains a confessional or nonconfessional form of education. Any laws, no matter how perfect they are, cannot be ideal regarding upbringing. Hence, it is necessary to satisfy the needs of young people in the study and teaching of religion to foster comprehensiveness of Uzbekistan's spiritual culture. Currently, the processes of secularization, influenced by scientific and technological progress, requires religious education to be associated with personal identity. If this is not resolved, it is difficult to advocate the effectiveness of youth policy in Uzbekistan. Thus, the official confessional teaching of religion to children to engender a healthy faith in them will prevent negative phenomena, such as extremism and terrorism.

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