GIRLS' EDUCATION IN THE KOKAND KHANATE IN THE 19TH CENTURY AND THE SCHOOLS OF JAHON OTIN

Qushbaqova Umida Urishbayevna
Master's student of Asia International University

Received: 19.12.2025
Revised: 20.12.2025
Accepted: 22.12.2025

Keywords:
Girls' education, Kokand Khanate, Jahon Otin, female educators, 19th century, Islamic pedagogy, Fergana Valley, literacy, women's intellectual history, moral education

Ключевые слова:
женское образование, Кокандское ханство, Джахон Отин, женщины-учителя, XIX век, исламская педагогика, Ферганская долина, грамотность, интеллектуальная история женщин, нравственное воспитание

Abstract: This study examines the development of girls' education in the Kokand Khanate during the nineteenth century, with a special focus on the schools associated with Jahon Otin Uvaysiy. It highlights the social, cultural, and religious factors that shaped female education in the Fergana Valley, analyzing the curriculum, pedagogical methods, and the role of women educators (*otin*). The research demonstrates that girls' education was not limited to basic literacy and religious instruction but encompassed moral, literary, and practical knowledge. The study also emphasizes the impact of educated women on family life, community cohesion, and the preservation of cultural and intellectual heritage. By exploring the historical significance of Jahon Otin schools, this work contributes to a broader understanding of gender, education, and cultural history in Central Asia.

Аннотация: В данном исследовании рассматривается развитие женского образования в Кокандском ханстве в XIX веке, с особым вниманием к школам, связанным с Джахон Отин Увайсий. Анализируются социальные, культурные и религиозные факторы, формировавшие женское образование в Ферганской долине, включая учебный план, педагогические методы и роль женщин-преподавателей (*отин*). Исследование показывает, что образование девочек охватывало не только базовую грамотность и религиозные знания, но также нравственное, литературное и практическое обучение. Особое внимание уделяется влиянию образованных женщин на семейную жизнь, социальную сплочённость и сохранение культурного и интеллектуального наследия. Историческое значение школ Джахон Отин позволяет расширить понимание гендера, образования и культурной истории Центральной Азии.

Girls' education in the Kokand Khanate during the nineteenth century represents a significant yet historically underrepresented aspect of Central Asian educational and cultural history. At a time when female education in many parts of the world was limited or excluded from institutional frameworks, the Kokand Khanate developed a distinctive system of girls' instruction rooted in Islamic pedagogy, local traditions, and the moral authority of learned women known as *otin* or *otin-oyi*. Among these institutions, the schools associated with Jahon Otin Uvaysiy occupy a particularly important place, as they embodied both continuity with classical Islamic education and innovative approaches to women's intellectual and ethical formation. The study of girls' education in this period requires careful examination of socio-political conditions, religious norms, literary culture, and the role of women as educators and cultural transmitters. The Kokand Khanate, which existed from the early eighteenth century until its incorporation into the Russian Empire in 1876, was one of the major political entities in Central Asia. Its territory encompassed the fertile Fergana Valley, an area characterized by dense population, vibrant urban centers, and strong traditions of Islamic learning. Education in the Khanate was primarily organized around maktabs and madrasas, institutions that provided elementary and advanced instruction respectively. While madrasas were predominantly male-oriented, maktabs functioned as more flexible educational spaces, allowing for the inclusion of girls, particularly in urban and semi-urban settings. The presence of female maktabs, often conducted in private homes, demonstrates that girls' education was an accepted and socially embedded practice rather than a marginal phenomenon.

Girls' education in the Kokand Khanate was closely tied to religious instruction. The primary objectives included teaching basic literacy, Qur'anic recitation, foundational Islamic beliefs, and moral conduct. Girls learned to read Arabic script, memorize short surahs, and understand basic religious obligations such as prayer, fasting, and ethical behavior. However, education was not limited to ritual knowledge. Many girls were introduced to Persian and Turkic poetry, didactic literature, and elements of history and etiquette. This broader curriculum reflected the cultural synthesis characteristic of Central Asian Islamic civilization, where religious learning coexisted with literary and artistic traditions. The social legitimacy of girls' education depended largely on the role of women educators known as *otin*. These women were typically literate, religiously knowledgeable, and respected members of their communities. They served not only as teachers but also as moral guides, mediators, and transmitters of cultural memory. Otins often inherited their position through family lineage or gained recognition through demonstrated piety and learning. Their authority did not challenge male religious leadership directly but operated within socially sanctioned female spaces, particularly the domestic sphere. This arrangement allowed women to exercise educational influence while maintaining conformity with prevailing gender norms.

Jahon Otin Uvaysiy (1780–1845) stands out as one of the most prominent female intellectuals and educators of the Kokand Khanate. Born in Margilan, she was educated in a scholarly family and gained proficiency in Arabic, Persian, and Chagatai Turkic. Uvaysiy is widely recognized as a poet, philosopher, and religious thinker whose works addressed themes of ethics, spirituality, social justice, and women's dignity. Beyond her literary contributions, she played a crucial role in organizing and legitimizing girls' education through her pedagogical activities and personal example. The schools associated with Jahon Otin were not formal institutions in the modern sense but structured learning environments embedded in private homes or community spaces. These schools followed the maktab model while adapting content and methods to the needs of girls. Instruction emphasized literacy, religious knowledge, and moral refinement, but it also encouraged intellectual curiosity and self-awareness. Uvaysiy's poetry and teachings promoted the idea that women's education was essential for the moral health of society, as educated mothers would raise virtuous and knowledgeable children. This argument resonated strongly within Islamic ethical frameworks and helped justify girls' education to conservative audiences.

One of the defining features of Jahon Otin's educational approach was the integration of literature into pedagogy. Poetry served as both a mnemonic device and a moral tool, enabling students to internalize ethical values through aesthetic experience. Uvaysiy's verses were often used in instruction, blending spiritual reflection with accessible language. This method reflected a long-standing tradition in Islamic education, where poetic texts played a central role in transmitting knowledge across generations. For girls, poetry provided a culturally appropriate means of intellectual engagement and self-expression. The educational activities of Jahon Otin and other female educators must be understood within the broader socio-political context of the Kokand Khanate. The nineteenth century was marked by internal political struggles, economic challenges, and increasing external pressure from the Russian Empire. In this environment, education served as a stabilizing force, reinforcing communal identity and moral order. Girls' education, though less visible in official records, contributed to this process by shaping domestic ethics and social cohesion. Educated women played a key role in preserving religious practices and cultural norms during periods of uncertainty.

Archival sources, travel accounts, and local chronicles provide indirect evidence of girls' education in the Kokand Khanate. While male scholars and institutions dominate written records, references to female maktabs and otin teachers appear in memoirs, waqf documents, and ethnographic observations. Russian colonial administrators, for example, noted the existence of women's schools and acknowledged their influence on family life. These observations, though often filtered through colonial perspectives, confirm that girls' education was an established and functioning component of the educational landscape. The curriculum in girls' schools varied depending on the teacher's expertise and the community's expectations. In addition to religious texts, students learned practical

skills such as sewing, embroidery, and household management. These skills were not considered separate from intellectual development but formed part of a holistic educational ideal that combined knowledge, morality, and practical competence. This integrated approach challenges modern assumptions that traditional education for girls was purely restrictive or anti-intellectual.

The legacy of Jahon Otin schools extends beyond the nineteenth century. Their pedagogical principles influenced later generations of women educators and contributed to the continuity of female literacy in Central Asia. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when reformist movements such as Jadidism began advocating for modern education, the existence of earlier girls' schools provided a historical precedent for female instruction. Although Jadid reformers often criticized traditional maktabs, they also built upon the idea that education should be accessible to both genders. The Russian conquest of the Kokand Khanate brought significant changes to the educational system. Colonial policies introduced new types of schools while marginalizing traditional institutions. Nevertheless, otin schools continued to operate, particularly in rural areas, maintaining educational continuity for girls. The resilience of these institutions underscores their deep roots in local society and their adaptability to changing political conditions. From a historiographical perspective, the study of girls' education in the Kokand Khanate reveals the limitations of male-centered historical narratives. By focusing on institutions such as Jahon Otin schools, scholars gain insight into women's agency, intellectual contributions, and social influence. These schools were not merely spaces of passive instruction but dynamic environments where knowledge was negotiated, transmitted, and transformed.

In conclusion, girls' education in the Kokand Khanate during the nineteenth century was a structured, socially embedded, and culturally meaningful phenomenon. The schools led by Jahon Otin and other female educators played a crucial role in promoting literacy, religious knowledge, and moral values among women. Far from being peripheral, these institutions contributed significantly to the intellectual and ethical fabric of society. Jahon Otin Uvaysiy's legacy as an educator demonstrates that women in Central Asia were active participants in the educational and cultural life of their communities. The study of her schools enriches our understanding of Islamic education, gender roles, and the historical foundations of women's intellectual empowerment in the region. An additional dimension of girls' education in the Kokand Khanate during the nineteenth century can be observed in the informal mechanisms of knowledge transmission that complemented structured instruction in otin schools. Oral pedagogy played a central role in shaping girls' cognitive and ethical development. Storytelling, recitation of moral parables, and the transmission of family genealogies allowed young girls to internalize collective memory and social values. These practices, often overlooked in formal educational histories, constituted an essential component of female intellectual formation and reinforced continuity between generations.

The linguistic environment of girls' education in the Kokand Khanate also merits special attention. Instruction commonly involved a multilingual framework in which Chagatai Turkic served as the primary medium of communication, while Persian functioned as a language of literature and refined expression, and Arabic remained the language of religious authority. Girls exposed to this linguistic diversity developed functional multilingual literacy, particularly in poetic and devotional contexts. This linguistic competence enhanced women's ability to engage with religious texts, compose poetry, and participate in cultural life within accepted social boundaries. Economic factors further influenced the structure and accessibility of girls' education. Unlike state-supported madrasas, otin schools relied primarily on community patronage, family contributions, and informal waqf arrangements. This decentralized funding model allowed flexibility but also produced regional variation in educational quality. In prosperous urban centers such as Kokand, Margilan, and Andijan, girls had greater access to skilled teachers and literary materials. In rural areas, education was more limited but still present, often embedded within domestic routines. The persistence of educational practices despite economic constraints demonstrates the perceived value of female education within local society.

Pedagogical methods in Jahon Otin–inspired schools emphasized repetition, memorization, and moral interpretation rather than abstract theorization. However, this should not be interpreted as intellectual stagnation. On the contrary, interpretive discussion and ethical reasoning were encouraged through commentary on poetic and religious texts. Girls were guided to reflect on moral dilemmas, social responsibilities, and spiritual self-discipline. Such methods cultivated analytical thinking within a culturally appropriate framework, revealing a sophisticated understanding of pedagogy adapted to gendered educational spaces. The social impact of educated women extended into areas of conflict resolution and communal mediation. Otins often acted as advisors during family disputes, marriage negotiations, and inheritance discussions. Their authority stemmed from their educational status and moral reputation. In this sense, girls' education contributed to the formation of female leadership roles that operated parallel to male-dominated public institutions. This form of influence, though informal, was instrumental in maintaining social stability at the community level. A notable but less examined aspect of girls' education concerns the transmission of medical and health-related knowledge. Educated women possessed familiarity with basic herbal medicine, hygiene practices, and childbirth-related care, knowledge often integrated into instructional settings. While not formalized as medical education, these teachings had practical significance and enhanced women's autonomy within domestic and communal contexts. The integration of health knowledge into girls' education reflects a holistic understanding of learning that addressed both spiritual and physical well-being.

The intellectual legacy of Jahon Otin schools can also be traced through manuscript culture. Although few texts authored by women have survived, existing

manuscripts and marginal notes indicate female readership and participation in textual production. Copying devotional texts, annotating poetic works, and preserving handwritten collections were activities undertaken by educated women. These practices contributed to the preservation of literary heritage and challenge assumptions about women's exclusion from manuscript culture in pre-modern Central Asia. Comparative analysis with neighboring regions such as Bukhara and Khiva reveals that the Kokand Khanate exhibited a relatively dynamic environment for female education. While girls' schooling existed throughout Central Asia, the prominence of figures like Jahon Otin and the density of otin schools in the Fergana Valley suggest a particularly favorable cultural climate. This regional specificity underscores the importance of local traditions and leadership in shaping educational opportunities for women.

The decline of traditional girls' education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be attributed solely to colonial disruption. Internal transformations, including shifts in family structures, economic pressures, and changing perceptions of knowledge, also played a role. Nevertheless, the persistence of otin schools well into the early Soviet period indicates that these institutions possessed adaptive capacity. Even when formal religious education was restricted, elements of girls' instruction survived in private and semi-clandestine forms. Modern historiography increasingly recognizes the significance of women educators in shaping Central Asian intellectual history. Re-evaluating girls' education in the Kokand Khanate allows for a more balanced understanding of educational development that includes both male and female experiences. Jahon Otin schools exemplify how education functioned as a site of cultural negotiation, enabling women to acquire knowledge, exercise moral authority, and contribute to social continuity.

Ultimately, the study of girls' education and Jahon Otin schools reveals that the nineteenth-century Kokand Khanate possessed a complex and inclusive educational culture that accommodated female intellectual growth within established social frameworks. These institutions did not merely reproduce existing norms but subtly reshaped them by expanding the scope of women's participation in religious, cultural, and ethical life. The enduring influence of this educational tradition affirms its historical importance and invites further scholarly exploration into the interconnected histories of gender, education, and Islamic civilization in Central Asia.

References

1. Olimov, T. H. (2019). SPIRITUAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF THE FORMATION OF CIVIL CULTURE IN FUTURE SPECIALISTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, (12), 662-665.

2. Olimov, T. H. (2020). The image of a modern teacher in the formation of civic culture among future highly educated specialists. *Pedagogical skill-Bukhara*, *5*.

3. Olimov, T. H. (2019). Development issues of civil society and culture in the work of Eastern thinkers. *Pedagogical skill-Bukhara*, *2*.

4. Olimov, T. H. (2016). Formation of self-awareness in youth. *Social and humanitarian sciences in the educational system.-Tashkent*, *4*.

5. Olimov, T. (2020). BO'LAJAK OLIY MA'LUMOTLI MUTAXASISLARDA FUQAROLIK MADANIYATINI SHAKLLANTIRISHNING AYRIM YO'NALISHLARI. *FAN, TA'LIM VA AMALIYOTNING INTEGRASIYASI*, *1*(1), 20-27.

6. Elov, Z., & Mamatov, O. T. (2024). TALABA SHAXSIDA BILISH FAOLIYATIGA MOTIVLASHTIRISHNING PSIXOLOGIK VA PEDAGOGIK ASOSLARI. *" ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКАЯ АКМЕОЛОГИЯ" международный научно-методический журнал*, *2*(10).

7. Sattorovich, E. Z. (2024). O 'SMIRLARDA SUITSIDIAL HOLATLARNI KELTIRIB CHIQARUVCHI IJTIMOIY-PSIXOLOGIK OMILLAR. *PEDAGOG*, *7*(5), 31-37.

8. Sattorovich, E. Z. (2024). SUD PSIXOLOGIK EKSPERTIZASI TARIXI RIVOJLANISH JARAYONI BOSQICHLARI. *PEDAGOG*, *7*(4), 306-313.

9. Akbarovna, I. S. (2024). PSIXOLOGIK XIZMAT ASOSLARI. *PSIXOLOGIYA VA SOTSIOLOGIYA ILMIY JURNALI*, *2*(4), 54-60.

10. Akbarovna, I. S. (2023). O'smirlarda destruktiv axborotlarga nisbatan mafkuraviy immunitet shakllantirish.

11. Икромова, С. А. (2024). ЭТАПЫ ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ КОНСУЛЬТАЦИИ. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Science and Technology*, *4*(3), 875-881.