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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**THE ISSUE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND STATUS IN THE VIEW OF THE JADIDS
AND TRADITIONALISTS****Nodira Jokhongirovna Kholikova***Head of the Department of Uzbek Literary Studies at CSPU**Doctor of Science (DSc) in Philological Sciences, Associate Professor**E-mail address: nodira.79@inbox.ru**Tashkent, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

Key words: Jadids, traditionalists (Qadimists), the women's question, enlightenment, emancipation, Ismail Gasprinsky, hijab, press debates, the "Hujum" campaign, social changes.

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Abstract: This article examines the interpretation of the status and rights of women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the perspectives of the Jadids and traditionalists (Qadimists). The Jadid enlighteners highlighted women's literacy and rights as a crucial catalyst for societal progress. Through the analysis of Ismail Gasprinsky's works and views, the ideas of women's emancipation are scrutinized, demonstrating how the issue of gender equality is reflected in his novels *The Muslims of Dar al-Rahat* and *The Land of Women*. Furthermore, the perspectives on women held by key thinkers such as Fitrat, Hamza, and Avloni are elucidated. Conversely, the article underscores that the traditionalists advocated for the preservation of conventional dogmas. It reveals that the discourse surrounding the hijab (Islamic veil) and paranja (the traditional Central Asian full-body veil) stood at the core of the social debates of that era. The analysis extends to the fierce polemics carried out in the contemporary press and periodicals regarding this matter. Finally, the study outlines the implementation of women's liberation policies through the "Hujum" (Assault) campaign and concludes with a scientifically grounded evaluation of the socio-

Introduction. The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a period of socio-spiritual awakening in the Muslim East, a process in which the women's question occupied a paramount position. In Turkestan society, the widespread illiteracy among women, coupled with their legal restrictions and marginalized social status, became the central focus of Jadid enlighteners. They aimed to reform society fundamentally through the implementation of the new-method (usul-i jadid) education. Concurrently, the traditionalists (Qadimists) defended conventional socio-religious dogmas, reacting in varied ways to these shifting dynamics. This article is dedicated to elucidating how the issue of women's rights and status was interpreted through the respective lenses of the Jadids and traditionalists.

Materials and Methods. The historical-comparative analysis method was employed in the preparation of this article. The primary sources utilized in the study encompass the works of Jadid thinkers (such as Ismail Gasprinsky, Fitrat, Behbudi, and Avloni), alongside contemporary periodical press materials published in the early 20th century, including Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti (The Newspaper of the Turkestan Province), Al-Isloh, and Al-Izoh. Furthermore, scholarly literature and the works of contemporary researchers (such as B. Qosimov, S. Shodmonova, among others) were integrated into the analytical framework. Based on these comprehensive materials, the respective viewpoints of the Jadids and traditionalists were comparatively evaluated utilizing content analysis and historical analysis methodologies.

Result and Discussion. The analysis reveals that the Jadids regarded women's literacy and social activism as a foundational prerequisite for societal progress. In the literary and journalistic works of Ismail Gasprinsky, the concept of gender equality was strongly advocated, emphasizing the necessity of expanding women's roles within the public sphere. Similarly, the works of Fitrat, Avloni, and Hamza elevated female education and social rights to the forefront of the intellectual discourse. Conversely, the traditionalists (Qadimists) adhered strictly to the conventional worldview, maintaining that a woman's primary responsibility should remain confined within the domestic sphere. Consequently, the issue of the hijab (Islamic veil) and paranja (full-body covering) ignited fierce polemics in the contemporary press. Periodicals such as Al-Isloh and Al-Izoh became platforms for articulating these deeply polarized viewpoints. Furthermore, while the "Hujum" (Assault) campaign marked a critical turning point in the policy of state-led women's liberation, it was simultaneously accompanied by intense social friction and systemic resistance. Historical sources document that this transition also resulted in numerous tragic outcomes in the destinies of many women.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, during the neo-renaissance period of the Muslim East, issues surrounding women's liberation, alongside the prevalent illiteracy and lack of education among them, deeply concerned the region's intelligentsia. Eradicating illiteracy within the Turkestan region necessitated a novel approach: abandoning archaic pedagogical methods in favor of implementing a European-style educational framework. One of the pioneers of this systemic transition was the prominent enlightener and the universally acknowledged father of the Jadid intelligentsia, Ismail Gasprinsky. He proposed a modernized instructional methodology that seamlessly synthesized European, localized, and national educational dimensions. This paradigm shift was imperative, as the existing traditional educational apparatus had utterly failed to meet the exigent demands of the contemporary era.

From its very inception, the women's question occupied a prominent place in the pages of the *Tarjuman* newspaper. In 1887 and 1891, Gasprinsky attempted to launch a dedicated periodical for women; however, these initiatives were consistently rejected by St. Petersburg bureaucrats and ultimately failed to materialize. Gasprinsky's ideological stances regarding the women's question are vividly articulated in his utopian novels, *The Muslims of Dar al-Rahat* and *The Land of Women*. In the former work, he portrays women as completely equal to men across all spheres of life. Specifically, he constructs the literary archetype of a female qadi (judge), without whose consent no domestic dispute or women's issue can be adjudicated or hold legal validity in court. In the latter novel, Gasprinsky employs a structural role reversal by placing men in the traditional social positions of women. In this fictional society, it is the men who observe the hijab (veiling), rear children, prepare meals, and launder clothes, while women exercise absolute authority in all public and private affairs. Through this deliberate satirical inversion, Gasprinsky sought to illuminate the actual subjugated status of Muslim women in contemporary society, thereby elevating this critical issue to the forefront of public discourse.

Ismail Gasprinsky's novel *The Muslims of Dar al-Rahat*, while operating within the genre of speculative adventure fiction, vividly depicts a utopian realm. Rich in compelling narratives and extraordinary elements, the work evokes deep emotional resonance in the reader, inspiring intellectual and social dynamism. The author's literary mastery lies in his ability to achieve a seamless artistic synthesis of his personal idealistic visions with concrete historical facts and events. Consequently, the reader simultaneously internalizes the author's underlying ideology, historical verities, and the aesthetic portrayal of an idyllic land. A defining and characteristic feature emphasized by the writer in this novel is the status of women. Their access to education on par with men, their equal socio-legal rights in domestic life, and particularly the presence of female qadis (judges) among them represented progressive societal norms that existed neither

in Tashkent nor in Farangistan (the West) at the time. This specific phenomenon underlines the core essence of Gasprinsky's intellectual agenda: the absolute necessity of women's emancipation.

In the words of the literary scholar Begali Qosimov, the speculative adventure novella *The Land of Women* functions doubly: "Just as the work serves as an ironical critique of Islamic fanaticism that dismisses women as 'long-haired and short-witted,' it was also a rebellion against the stripping away of their inherent grace and their subsequent 'masculinization' under the guise of emancipation." Indeed, the scholar rightly observes that while this work, at first glance, embodies the concept of "emancipation"—namely, the liberation of women—it intrinsically harbors a profound critique against the distortion of female identity through artificial masculinization.

Similarly, in Fitrat's *Munozara (The Debate)*, the author continuously reinforces that acquiring knowledge is an absolute necessity for every individual, regardless of gender. The text emphasizes ensuring the inviolability of human rights and securing equality irrespective of social origin. Fitrat advocates for the eradication of societal vices such as the abuse of power, bribery, and depravity. Crucially, he highlights that the upbringing of a well-rounded generation forms the very bedrock of the nation's future, a monumental task in which the contribution, status, and responsibility of women are of unbounded significance.

In the early 20th century, the process of discarding the paranja (full-body veil) among Uzbek women was fraught with intense socio-cultural contradictions. For a considerable period, men within the local populace found it profoundly difficult to accept this transformation. In his programmatic article entitled "The Liberation of Women and the Issue of the Hijab," the prominent intellectual Khoji Muin articulated this dynamic as follows:

"The paranja and chashband (horsehair face-veil) historically prevented our women from actively participating in social and economic affairs. Nowadays, under the auspices of the government's rigorous endeavors, we witness with immense joy how our women are liberating themselves from the black veil (paranja) and attaining genuine freedom. They are now requesting the establishment of specialized schools, courses, industrial workshops, and artels tailored for women. This, in turn, demonstrates that the eyes of our women, and indeed of our populace as a whole, are beginning to open."

In the early 20th century, the Jadids and traditionalists (Qadimists) of the Turkestan region remained deeply divided on the issue of gender equality and rights. While the Tatar periodical press—much like the contemporary domestic journals *Al-Isloh* and *Al-Izoh*—frequently asserted that women's rights should be equal to those of men, counterarguments

conversely maintained that men possessed inherent superiority over women in every respect [1], [2]. As Gasprinsky emphasized, upon entering marriage, a woman embraces the dual role of a spouse and a mother; within domestic life, she is expected to care for her husband, prepare meals, and maintain household order. In turn, while the husband is required to ensure financial security and generate income for the family, the wife is expected to manage her husband's earnings prudently for the collective well-being of the household [3]. Indeed, as the enlightened author delineates, both men and women have distinct, designated responsibilities within the familial structure. Having previously addressed the Islamic perspective on this matter, it can be concluded that viewing either gender as inherently superior or inferior is fundamentally antithetical to the principles of humanism and ethical morality.

The commentary on these socio-political phenomena had commenced slightly earlier through contemporary periodical journals such as *Al-Isloh* and *Al-Izoh*.

A substantial volume of debates and polemics regarding the women's question was published within the pages of these journals. Concerning the editorial stance of the journal *Al-Isloh*, the existing scholarly consensus notes: "The progressive enlighteners of the era, in direct opposition to the conservative ulama (religious scholars), urged women toward openness—meaning intellectual enlightenment—and called upon them to acquire scientific knowledge on par with men in order to rear a well-rounded generation."

For instance, in the 24th issue of *Al-Isloh* published in 1915, an article was issued on behalf of the Editorial Board entitled "Abdolvahhob Murodiydin 'Shuro'ning o'n ikkinchi no'miri 659-sahifasina bir nazar" (A Glance from Abdolvahhob Murodiy at Page 659 of the Twelfth Issue of the Journal 'Shuro'). The piece discusses a critical essay authored by Murodiy concerning the women's question, which had been printed in the *Shuro* magazine. Murodiy lamented the widespread illiteracy among Turkestani women and criticized the lack of structural opportunities for their education, attributing this stagnation to the obstructionism of the ulama. Furthermore, Murodiy explicitly acknowledged the imperative for women to become intellectuals, emphasizing how vital secular and scientific knowledge is to child-rearing.

Naturally, such reformist articles provoked intense indignation among the conservative ulama. Even Saidahmad Vasli, one of the prominent representatives of the National Awakening period literature, articulated his traditionalist stances on this matter in a poem entitled "Tasatturi nisvon haqinda" (On the Veiling of Women), published in the 18th issue of *Al-Isloh* in 1915:

"The hijab is an exceedingly magnificent wealth for women and maidens,

The hijab is the veil of chastity upon the face of honor and modesty,
The hijab is a divine mercy for the sake of women who submit to God,
The hijab is an incomparable blessing for the revered Muslim women."

The issue of the hijab had emerged as one of the most critical and polarizing matters of that period. Notably, the contributors to the journal *Al-Izoh* also frequently addressed this theme. Among them was Ayniddin Soatboyev; in his article titled "An Open Letter to the People of Piety," published in the issue dated March 9, 1918, he wrote the following regarding the hijab:

"The Hijab. Regarding the veiling of women, they deny the explicit verses [of the Holy Quran], falsely claiming—*al-iyazu billah* [God forbid]—that it is not ordained in the Quran. By dressing their women in an abominable manner like the women of foreign nations, introducing them to Russian customs, passing them from hand to hand, and choosing the path of cuckoldry (*dayuslik*), they have rendered themselves deserving of the wrath and punishment of Allah, the Almighty and Most Holy.

By opening courses and schools for both men and women, and sending their daughters or wives to distant cities and villages without a mahram [unmarriageable male escort] into schools full of foreign men and youths, they have lost their sense of honor (*hamiyyat*) and humanity to a degree worse than animals. Due to their wretched worthlessness, they have faced profound condemnation before their own Muslim nation, and have furthermore become objects of ridicule and mockery before all foreign nations. Yet, they feel no shame that they have been utterly stripped and vacated of decency, justice, and modesty."

It was a historically predictable reality that not only the ulama and religious leaders, but also the average layperson, could not comprehend the notion of a Muslim woman discarding her hijab. An entrenched socio-religious paradigm that had been internalized for centuries could not be eradicated instantaneously. Consequently, in the early 20th century, the viewpoints regarding the issue of the hijab among the Jadid intelligentsia, the traditionalist ulama, and the broader populace of Turkestan remained deeply fragmented. The aforementioned polemics substantiate that the contemporary periodical press served as the primary epicenter of this ideological battlefield.

The emerging activism and initiative of women, along with their lived experiences and collective tribulations, profoundly engaged the creative intelligentsia of the era. A tragic case in point is that of the pioneering actress Tursunoy Saidazimova, who, during a theatrical tour in Bukhara in May 1928, was brutally murdered by her husband. Despite her youth, she had chosen a profession that was exceedingly hazardous for women of that epoch, and because of this choice, she untimely lost her life, becoming a victim of societal ignorance (*jaholat*). Relevant

historical sources confirm that individuals like Hojiqul—who murdered his wife out of blind jealousy—were not isolated anomalies; rather, they represented a widespread contingent of socio-culturally blind and reactive traditionalists.

This systemic hostility is also vividly illustrated in Hamza's dramatic work *Zamona Khotini* (The Contemporary Woman). In a dialogue depicted within the play, the followers (murids) of an Eshon (religious master) discuss the women who have discarded their paranjas, asserting that they "must be killed," to which a wealthy merchant (boy) adds: "These actions must be carried out to serve as a warning to everyone!" History bears witness that such threats materialized into grim realities. Actresses such as Tursunoy Saidazimova and Nurkhon Yuldashkhodjayeva were savagely murdered—the former by her husband and the latter by her brother—and the number of women who shared similar tragic destinies was substantial.

These tragic outcomes visually manifested the severe harshness of the era and the perilous escalation of religious fanaticism. Hamza's Maryam and Jamila, Avloni's Maryam, Qodiri's Rahima, and Badri's Tutioy all lamented their wretched destinies, their withered lives, and the tyranny of fate; ultimately, they attempted suicide, choosing poison as their sole means of escape.

The female archetypes constructed by Hamza—such as Jamila, Maryamkhon, Kholiskhon, and Sanavbar—were similarly victims of societal ignorance (jaholat) who turned to self-destruction. Had these women been educated and literate, they might have found the inner resilience to persevere, resist oppression, and claim their fundamental rights.

As noted by Doctor of Historical Sciences S. Shodmonova:

"The contemporary press rigorously condemned the practice of marrying off young girls aged 10 to 12, and the broader systemic issue of forcing young women, against their volition, into marriages with elderly men—in some instances, individuals older than their own fathers. It was documented as a deeply deplorable reality that these young girls, unable to endure such institutionalized violence and finding no alternative recourse, felt compelled to attempt suicide. According to one reported account, a 16-year-old girl named Fatima from the city of Astrakhan, whose parents sought to force her into a marriage with an elderly man against her consent, chose to ingest opium to end her life rather than tolerate such subjugation. Meanwhile, her co-religionists in other locales quietly endured the oppression of their parents, ultimately being 'given away to men as captives, treated no better than livestock'" [7].

Treating women with systemic condescension and viewing them as mere livestock directly precipitated the trampling of their fundamental rights, turning them into victims of

oppression and ignorance (jaholat), and resulting in their untimely deaths; this undoubtedly constituted the gravest tragedy of the nation in the early 20th century.

In the spring of 1927, the Communist Party Council in Tashkent swiftly established an aggressive six-month timeline aimed at forcing the women of Turkestan to discard the paranja. Consequently, a campaign to liberate Turkestani women from the veil was launched in honor of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution, officially designated as the "Hujum" (Assault). Although the Hujum campaign was fundamentally conceptualized as an assault against archaic, stagnant societal vices, its primary objective in Turkestan and Azerbaijan was to compel women to cast off the paranja, achieve personal liberation, and attain literacy. Nevertheless, historical reality dictates that the Hujum generated both positive and highly adverse outcomes.

Furthermore, the national intelligentsia resolutely opposed the institutionalized oppression inflicted upon women and vigorously advocated for their recognition as fully autonomous human beings. Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, reflecting on female enlightenment, famously stated:

"A woman is a human being most worthy of respect. She must be granted freedom, provided with opportunities to acquire education, and allowed to benefit from both material and spiritual blessings. The Sharia does not prohibit women from seeking education; on the contrary, it mandates it."

Crucially, the ideals of female education, liberty, and emancipation that were initially pioneered and popularized by the Jadids were subsequently weaponized and co-opted by the Soviet apparatus. Thus, the original advocacy for intellectual enlightenment became seemingly intertwined with the political maneuvers of the state-led Hujum campaign.

During the first quarter of the 20th century, it was primarily the Jadid enlighteners who championed the concepts of female emancipation and general societal liberation. Crucial matters concerning education, enlightenment, and freedom were systematically articulated under the overarching theme of the women's question. By the 1930s, however, this paradigm shifted, giving rise to highly socialized archetypes of women that conformed strictly to the ideology of the Soviet regime. Ultimately, the profound ideological divergence that emerged between the Jadids and the traditionalists (Qadimists) specifically on the women's question precipitated numerous adverse socio-political consequences.

Conclusion. The women's question emerged as one of the most critical social and ideological issues within Turkestani society in the early 20th century. The confrontations between the Jadids and the traditionalists (Qadimists) reverberated far beyond education and

culture, profoundly impacting all spheres of social life. While the Jadids sought to modernize society through the lens of women's rights and intellectual enlightenment, the Qadimists resolutely strived to preserve the traditional status quo. These contentious processes ultimately catalyzed a transformation in the socio-legal status of women and led to the formation of novel social models. In this regard, the issue under discussion is evaluated as a pivotal milestone in the region's historical development.

This article analyzes how the women's question in late 19th and early 20th-century Turkestan society was fundamentally shaped by the conflicting ideological stances between the Jadid and Qadimist movements. Viewing female literacy, legal equality, and social activism as indispensable prerequisites for societal progress, the Jadid enlighteners championed the integration of women into both the modernized educational framework and public life. Conversely, the Qadimists advocated for the preservation of traditional religious-social dogmas, interpreting the role of women within a severely restricted domestic sphere. The study reveals that the concept of women's emancipation found multi-faceted expression in the works of such prominent enlighteners as Ismail Gasprinsky, Fitrat, Hamza, and Abdulla Avloni, thereby igniting widespread public and intellectual discourse. Notably, the contemporary periodical press is identified as the primary battleground for this clash of perspectives. Although the contentious issues surrounding the hijab and paranja, coupled with the structural social shifts implemented under the auspices of the Hujum campaign, marked a drastic turning point in the destinies of women, these processes were accompanied by complex social contradictions and tragic occurrences. Consequently, the women's question is evaluated not merely as an ideological dispute, but as an intricate historical process inextricably linked to human rights and societal modernization. Ultimately, this research scientifically substantiates that the profound divergences between Jadid and Qadimist paradigms exerted a powerful influence on the socio-spiritual evolution of early 20th-century Turkestan society, serving as a decisive catalyst in the shifting status of women.

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